E. de Vesci

MEMOIRS

OF THE

KINGS OF FRANCE,

OF THE

RACE OF VALOIS.

INTERSPERSED WITH INTERESTING ANECDOTES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A TOUR

THROUGH THE WESTERN, SOUTHERN, AND INTERIOR PROVINCES OF FRANCE,

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY NATH. WRAXALL, JUN. ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

DUBLIN:

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M DCC LXXVII.

BRITISH MUSEUM
15 67
MAR

TO THE

EARL OF HILLSBOROUGH.

MY LORD,

IF the memoirs and anecdotes of illuſtrious men have, in all ages, been intereſting to mankind in general, how much more ſo muſt they be to thoſe who move in the ſame ſphere, and ſeem to be in a manner connected with them by rank, occupation, and character?

It was the ſenſe of this peculiar propriety, which firſt made me deſirous of addreſſing the following ſheets to your Lordſhip.

What other motives concurred in ſuggeſting the wiſh, I am withheld

from expreſſing, by the apprehenſion of offending that delicacy which never fails to characteriſe great minds, and which leaves me only the liberty of declaring in general terms, the ſincere reſpect and admiration with which I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

moſt obedient,

humble ſervant,

London, New Bond-ſtreet,
Nov. 22, 1776.

N. WRAXALL, Jun.

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MEMOIRS

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OF THE

KINGS OF FRANCE, &c.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

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THE hiſtory of France may be conſidered as abounding more in thoſe intereſting ſcenes which touch the heart, than any other.

The annals of England are bolder, and marked with ſtronger colours; but like the genius of the nation, they are auſtere and gloomy. Few of thoſe pleaſing and elegant anecdotes occur, which ſoften the horror of battles, and open the gentler ſources of entertainment. The long wars and alternate maſſacres of the two houſes of York and Lancaſter, were followed by the capricious tyranny of the family of Tudor. Even Elizabeth's reign, juſtly renowned for policy and wiſdom, is not comparable, for refinement and cultivation of manners, to the court of Catharine of Medicis. The efforts of a paſſion for liberty, however noble and juſtifiable in themſelves, mingled with the frenzy of fanaticiſm, impeded the entrance of thoſe humanizing arts which poliſh ſociety, during the greater part of the ſeventeenth century; and Charles the ſecond, educated in foreign countries, and habituated to more courtly climes, firſt introduced the [illegible] of gallantry, which was

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was unknown before to the nation, or at leaſt but faintly characteriſed it.

The French hiſtory, on the contrary, is exuberant in thoſe ſtrokes and characters which bring the ſovereign immediately to our view, and even diveſt him of all that ſplendor or dignity, which uſually veils him from obſervation. The little weakneſſes of the heart, the treſpaſſes of paſſion, how infinitely do they engage! We contemplate ourſelves, we pity, and we forgive.—Why are Francis the firſt, and Henry the fourth, ſo peculiarly objects of the attachment of every feeling reader? Becauſe they were diſtinguiſhed by thoſe amiable and engaging foibles which ſerve to contraſt the virtues of the warrior and the king, which nature has almoſt conſtantly and inſeparably interwoven in animated and exalted boſoms. We like to quit the council-board, or the plain of carnage and deſolation, to follow the man, and behold him in the retirements of private life.

From this principle it is, that Memoirs, though leſs noble and auguſt than Hiſtory, are yet generally more juſt to nature, and intereſt us in a livelier degree. Confined to a narrower ſphere, but diffuſe and minute, they ſatisfy the reſtleſs curioſity of the mind, to know thoſe trivial and unimportant tranſactions of the individual, which Hiſtory diſdains to enumerate, and paſſes over in ſilence.

In theſe ſources of information, the French

are as profuſe, as we ſeem to have been barren and unproductive: nor are the amours and intrigues of the court of James the firſt better known than thoſe of Francis the firſt, though poſterior by near a century.

There is, however, a point, beyond which a liberal but corrected curioſity carries not its reſearches. The events of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries are wrapped in too groſs a barbariſm, and obſcured by too profound an ignorance, to merit the pains or repay the trouble of an elaborate ſearch. Scarce any materials are procurable; ſcarce any of the great actuating motives which then influenced the princes or people exiſt in any ſhape at preſent; ſcarce any deductions are applicable to theſe times, from the conduct or policy of thoſe. As knowledge and letters broke in upon this darkneſs, every thing riſes in its effect upon the mind, and becomes of importance. The objects ſwell to the view, and are more intimately diſcernible.—There is, perhaps, no exact and preciſe æra at which to date this alteration. I cannot extend it higher than the acceſſion of Philip de Valois; to bring it down to that of Charles the ſeventh may be too ſevere.—Let us begin with the reign of Charles the fifth.

I pretend not to give any accurate picture of kings or governments: I boaſt not to throw many new lights on hiſtory: I mean not to enter into a chronological narration of facts.—My wiſh

wiſh is to place before the reader thoſe ſtriking qualities of the ſucceſſive princes, which bring them forward to the eye, and characterize the manners of the age in which they flouriſhed; to make him acquainted with the chief miniſters, or miſtreſſes, or generals, who acted the ſecond parts under them; to allow myſelf the fulleſt liberty of reflection, of cenſure, of admiration, uninfluenced by preſcription, prejudice, or country.

If we ſurvey the ſituation of France at the period with which I have choſen to begin, it preſents a ſcene of deſolation, and almoſt of anarchy. The unjuſt pretenſions of Edward the third of England to the crown, had involved the kingdom in blood and ruin. If he did not attain the complete gratification of his ambition, his glory at leaſt was ſatiated by the captivity of John; and the peace of Bretigny had reſtored to him all thoſe provinces which his anceſtors had poſſeſſed in Guyenne and Gaſcony. His ſon, the Black Prince, yet dreadful from the fields of Crecy and of Poitiers, held his court in theſe dominions. He was ſtill in the prime of manhood, and his character, adorned with all the ſhining qualities of a warrior and a ſovereign, ſpread terror to the remoteſt confines of the French monarchy.

Charles the Bad, king of Navarre, had already been active in all the commotions of the

preceding reign; he had pretenſions to the crown in right of his mother Jane, daughter of Louis the tenth, and his turbulent and diſcontented ſpirit induced him to form alliances of the cloſeſt nature with the Engliſh. Nature had endowed him with all thoſe talents and qualifications, which, under the guidance of a vicious heart, are eminently pernicious. Munificent and generous, he captivated the multitude. Verſed in all the arts of addreſs, and even of eloquence to varniſh over his crimes, he had boldneſs enough to perpetrate the moſt atrocious. An avowed and inveterate enemy to Charles, he had given him poiſon when dauphin, and though the effects of it were retarded, they yet terminated in his death ſome years afterwards. Fickle and perfidious, he violated even his intereſts to gratify his paſſions, and trampled on the laws of conſanguinity, of patriotiſm, and of honour.

Bands of deſperate banditti, to whom the late wars had given birth, and whom the peace had rendered unneſſary, over-ran the provinces, and added to the general confuſion. The lands lay deſert and uncultivated; a plague had ſwept away prodigious numbers of the people; and the taxes, which the ranſom of the late king and the diſorders of the ſtate had encreaſed to an unprecedented degree, tended to produce a ſpirit of revolt and diſaffection among them.

Charles had only attained his twenty-ſixth year

year when he aſcended the throne, but he had been educated in the ſchool of great princes, adverſity. Inſtructed by the fatal experience of his father and grandfather, he ſtudiouſly avoided thoſe errors into which their preſumption and raſhneſs had led them.

A train of victory and conqueſt had raiſed the courage of the Engliſh nation, and depreſſed the genius of France. Two able and powerful princes commanded them, both in the vigor of their age. Though the ſtorm had ſpent its force, it was not yet ſubſided, nor did any apparent decline in their affairs mark the moment when they might be attacked with ſucceſs. Charles knew how to adopt that wary and temporiſing policy, which peculiarly diſtinguiſhes ſtateſmen born to retrieve the affairs of empires, and which almoſt always finally attains its ends. It is not fortune, but wiſdom, that diſpoſes of the events of human life.

A circumſtance which at firſt ſeemed to carry the Engliſh glory to the greateſt heighth, opened to Charles the occaſion he ſo much deſired, and enabled him from the receſſes of the Louvre to regain without a battle what both his predeceſſors had loſt. Pedro, ſurnamed the Cruel and the Wicked, reigned in Caſtile. He had put his queen to death by poiſon, though young and beautiful, and virtuous, to gratify a miſtreſs to whom he was enſlaved. He had murdered one of his brothers, and at-

tempted the lives of the others. Henry de Traſtemare, the eldeſt of theſe, weary of the tyrant's exceſſes, and puſhed by deſpair, fled into France. Charles the fifth received him with open arms, lent him a general and troops, with which he returned into Spain, and by whoſe aſſiſtance he diſpoſſeſſed his rival.

Pedro, deteſted and odious even to foreigners, endeavoured in vain to find an aſylum in Portugal; and after wandering ſome time in Galicia, he embarked for Bourdeaux, to implore the protection and aſſiſtance of the prince of Wales. Fond of military fame, and flattered by the title of reſtorer or dethroner of kings, in an evil hour the prince conſented. He marched acroſs the Pyrenees, and met his antagoniſt in the plains of Navarette. Victory, which ſtill waited on him, declared in his favour. He replaced Pedro on the throne, and was repaid with that ingratitude which he ought to have expected. Scarce could he carry back to France the half of his troops, thinned by diſtempers, unrecompenſed, and diſcontented. He himſelf could not eſcape the attacks of a diſeaſe, which, though not immediately mortal, incapacitated him for thoſe fates of arms, and that exertion of perſonal proweſs, which had rendered him ſo eminent and renowned.

Bertrand du Gueſclin, only the ſecond captain of his age while the Black Prince could bear the weight of armour; who had been twice his priſoner, and whom he had ſet free from

from a magnanimous contempt of his capacity, now came forward. Charles put into his hand the conſtable's ſword, and ordered him to unſheath it againſt the enemies of France. In vain did the conqueror of Poitiers attempt to ſupport the great name which he had acquired in war. Vainly, with an indignant pride, did he threaten to attend his ſovereign lord, who ſummoned him as vaſſal, with ſixty thouſand men, and a helmet on his head. Debilitated, feeble, and depreſſed by ſickneſs, he made only ſome ineffectual efforts to ſtem the torrent of adverſe fortune. His death ſoon followed; and the minority which took place under his ſon, left Charles and du Gueſclin an almoſt undiſputed conqueſt.

In a few years all the victories of Edward were rendered abortive; and of the vaſt dominions which he had acquired, only Calais, Bourdeaux, and Bayonne, remained to his ſucceſſor. France had re-acquired her natural and ancient aſcendant; a wiſe and vigorous adminiſtration ſucceeding to the paſt convulſions, produced effects the moſt beneficial. Order and tranquillity began to reſume their ſeat in the provinces from which they had ſo long been baniſhed, and the houſe of Valois no longer held a precarious throne; when Charles expired in the prime of his age. Hiſtorians attribute it to the effects of that poiſon which the king of Navarre had adminiſtered to him many years before, and the conſequen-

ces of which a German phyſician had protracted in ſome degree, by an iſſue in his arm, which he at the ſame time predicted muſt be followed by death whenever it cloſed. Whether this ſtory does not carry with it a certain air of the marvellous, or whether poiſons can be thus delayed and mitigated, may perhaps appear doubtful *. Whatever was the cauſe, the effect was ruinous and deſtructive to the kingdom. With the king expired the guardian genius of the monarchy; and France, reſcued by his wiſdom, relapſed into all the miſeries ſhe had previouſly experienced.

It is unneceſſary to draw the portrait of Charles the fifth: it is beheld in the epitome of his reign. His ſagacity, his maſterly and tempered policy, were ſuperior to all the eclat of military ardor. He foreſaw the evils which muſt inevitably enſue to the ſtate from

* All the cotemporary writers agree in the aſſertion, that the king of Navarre adminiſtered poiſon to the dauphin; and that it was ſo violent as to cauſe his hair, nails, and the external ſkin to come off. The emperor Charles the fourth ſent him a phyſician, who in ſome degree ſuſpended the progreſs, and diminiſhed the mortal tendency of the venom, by opening a fiſtula in his arm. Charles the Bad himſelf ſurvived the king of France about ſeven years, and periſhed by a death equally ſingular and deplorable, in a very advanced age.—He was attacked with the leproſy, a diſeaſe, in that century, common through all Europe. His phyſicians had ordered him to be wrapped in bandages of linen previouſly ſteeped in brandy and ſulphur. A ſpark of fire accidentally falling on him, he was ſo miſerably burnt, before his attendants could extinguiſh it, that he expired at Pampelona only three days after.

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the ſituation of affairs, but he foreſaw without being able to redreſs them. He had intended to veſt the regency in the queen, one of the moſt accompliſhed and virtuous princeſſes of her time; but death deprived the kingdom of this reſource; and Bertrand du Gueſclin, from whoſe valour and conduct the ſtate might have drawn infinite advantages, was now no more. Perhaps no death was ever more fatal to France, except that of Henry the ſecond, which opened the wars of Calviniſm and of the League; nor can it be doubted, that if Charles had lived a few years longer, he would have obtained the moſt complete ſuperiority over the Engliſh, whom the vices of Richard the ſecond involved in all the confuſion of civil diſcord.

Charles the ſixth, who ſucceeded, was only twelve years of age; and as it was therefore neceſſary to appoint a regent, the late king, conſcious that his brother the duke of Anjou had the juſteſt claim from proximity of blood, nominated him to that charge previous to his death; and his firſt care was to aſſume the power: but as the perſon of the prince and the care of his education were conſigned to other hands, theſe divided and jarring intereſts ſoon broke out into open animoſity. The regent ſeems to be marked by no other qualities than an unbounded rapacity, and an inordinate ambition; vices too common to perſons of exalted

alted ſtations to form any great diſcriminating character!

The duke of Berri, third ſon of John, was a prince of mean abilities, and whom the ſuperior talents of his competitors in adminiſtration ever retained in a ſort of ſubordination and inferiority.

Philip the youngeſt, duke of Burgundy, was already celebrated by his valour, and powerful from his dominions. The favourite of his father, by whoſe ſide he was taken priſoner at the battle of Poitiers, when his other ſons deſerted him; John had diſtinguiſhed his courage and attachment by a reward worthy a ſovereign, the inveſtiture of Burgundy, the greateſt fief dependant on the crown. In this ſacrifice to affection, he violated the rules of ſound policy, and laid the foundation of ills which his deſcendants had cauſe to regret. Superadded to a dukedom in poſſeſſion, Philip had a vaſt territory in expectation by his marriage with the heireſs of the count of Flanders; and as he was eminent for intrepidity, and not defective in capacity, he formed an inſuperable barrier to the power which the regent claimed, and attempted to exerciſe. The authority of this latter was, however, of ſhort duration, and that luſt of dominion which diſtinguiſhed him, was the immediate cauſe of his ignominy and death.

The diſſolute and voluptuous Joan, deſcended from Charles of Anjou, brother of St.

St. Louis, reigned in Naples. Charles de Durazzo, her relation, whom ſhe had adopted as her ſucceſſor, and whom ſhe had bound by every obligation to gratitude, by an act of the baſeſt inhumanity depoſed and murdered his benefactreſs: previous to her death, the unfortunate queen called to her reſcue the duke of Anjou, and inſtituted him to the ſucceſſion.

Inflamed with deſire to poſſeſs the diadem devolved to him, the regent redoubled his exactions on the people, ſeized on all the treaſures which the late king had concealed in the walls of the caſtle of Melun; and encouraged by the Antipope, from whom he received the crown at Avignon, he marched his troops into Italy, conſiſting of thirty thouſand cavalry—but the Neapolitan prince, too wiſe to hazard a battle, and ſkilled in all the duplicity of Italian negotiation, deluded his rival by challenges which he never meant to fulfil, and protracted the execution of them till famine and diſeaſe began to waſte his forces. Surrounded, harraſſed, and continually purſued by a ſuperior army, the duke of Anjou was at length reduced to ſuch extreme diſtreſs, that of all the immenſe treaſures which he had carried from France, he had only one ſuit of arms made of painted ſtuff, and a ſingle cup of ſilver. Dejected with ſuch a ſeries of calamities, forgotten in France, and unaſſiſted by his brothers, he at length ſunk under the preſſure, and died

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in Calabria in the deepeſt want, and almoſt abandoned.

If we turn our view to France, we ſhall find all the diſorders and oppreſſions which uſually attend on minorities.—The dukes of Berri and Burgundy, greedy of power, and uſing it to the injury of the ſtate, gave riſe by their exactions to ſedition and tumult. The young king, whom his father had begun to train in ſentiments of virtue and greatneſs, neglected in his education, ſtudiouſly kept from an acquaintance with the affairs of his kingdom, and only taught to follow the chaſe, or immerſed in debauchery, promiſed no redreſs to theſe misfortunes. His heart was generous, beneficent, and friendly; he loved his people, he wiſhed, and even endeavoured to give them proofs of this diſpoſition: his underſtanding, though much uncultivated, and left to unfold itſelf without any aid, yet appears to have been clear, juſt, and manly. As he approached to years of maturity, the authority of his uncles diminiſhed; and when he firſt aſſumed the reins of government, he conciliated the affections of his people, by depriving the duke of Berri of the government of Languedoc, which he had greatly abuſed, and by the abſolute diſmiſſion of the duke of Burgundy.

The kingdom began to recover from the evils of a divided legiſlature, when an accident the moſt extraordinary and deplorable renewed and aggravated them——I mean the king's

king's madneſs. The circumſtances of it are very curious. We muſt go back a little, to trace them to the ſource.

During the extreme diſtreſſes to which Louis duke of Anjou was reduced, in his unfortunate expedition againſt Naples, he diſpatched the Seigneur de Craon into France, to procure a ſupply of money; but this nobleman after having raiſed a conſiderable ſum, inſtead of carrying it to his maſter, ſquandered it at Venice on entertainments and courtezans. On his return to Paris, the duke of Berri accuſed him as the author of his brother's death; and having afterwards committed an aſſaſſination in the ſtreets, he was obliged to take ſhelter in Bretagne, where the duke received and protected him. Charles, inſtigated by his miniſters, demanded the criminal, and on the duke's refuſal, prepared to ſeize him by force; he ſet out in perſon at the head of a conſiderable army: as he continued his march thro' a foreſt between Mans and La Fleche, in the day-time, a tall man, black and hideous, came from among the trees, and ſeizing his horſe's bridle, cried out, "Arrete, Roi! ou vas tu? "Tu es trahi."——then diſappeared. The king however purſued his journey, in defiance of this denunciation, when a ſecond accident, purely caſual, produced on him effects the moſt violent and unhappy.—It was in the month of Auguſt, and the heats were inſupportable. A page who carried the king's lance,

lance, being fallen aſleep on his horſe, let it fall upon a helmet which another bore before him; the noiſe which this cauſed, the ſight of the lance, and the words of the phantom recurring all at once to the king's imagination, he thought they were going to deliver him to his enemies, and this apprehenſion acting ſtrongly on his ſenſes, produced an inſtant fit of madneſs. He drew his ſword, and ſtriking furiouſly at all thoſe about him, killed and wounded ſeveral, before any one had force or addreſs enough to ſeize him: they effected it at laſt; the king ſpent with his efforts, fell into a ſort of lethargic ſwoon, and in this condition they carried him, tied down, in a cart, to the city of Mans.

The ſtory of the man in the wood appears at firſt ſight ſo apparently fictitious, that one ſhould certainly be induced to treat it as ſuch, if, ſuperadded to the univerſal teſtimony of the cotemporary writers, ſome of them did not give us reaſon to believe, that the duke of Burgundy ſet on foot this engine. He was the ſtrict ally of the duke of Bretagne; he had ſtrongly oppoſed the king's march; he was become unneceſſary and powerleſs. Charles had only juſt recovered from a fever at Amiens, in which he had given ſome ſymptoms of a diſordered underſtanding, which the phantom and fright were extremely calculated, in that ſuperſtitious and barbarous age, to heighten into frenzy.

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The miſerable prince recovered his ſenſes on the third day, but not that clearneſs of perception and underſtanding which he had previouſly enjoyed, and the expedition being rendered abortive, he was carried back to Paris by his uncles.

The incapacity of the king for public affairs reduced him once more to a ſtate of tutelage; and the neceſſity of veſting the regal power in more able hands, brought into light on this occaſion two characters which hitherto lay in a ſort of obſcurity——I mean the queen, and the duke of Orleans. The firſt of theſe, Iſabella of Bavaria, was a princeſs of uncommon perſonal beauty: fond of pleaſure, to which ſhe ſacrificed without reſtraint, her thirſt of power was not leſs inſatiable: of captivating addreſs, ſhe excelled in the arts of intrigue. Violent, vindictive, and capable of actions the moſt ſavage and unnatural in the purſuit of her favourite objects, ſhe involved the kingdom in war and tumult; violated the firſt feelings of a parent, by diſinheriting her offspring; and lived to become ſupremely odious and deſpicable, even to that party for whom ſhe had ſacrificed every conſideration of honour and humanity.

The duke of Orleans was the only brother of the king: he had juſt attained his twentieth year, when the event which I have related placed him in a ſituation to pretend to the poſſeſſion of the firſt office under the crown. If

his

his unripe youth ſeemed to diſqualify him for ſo high and important a truſt, his proximity of blood approached him by one degree nearer to the throne than his competitor the duke of Burgundy. His character reſembled in many reſpects that of his uncle the duke of Anjou, late regent. The ſame rapacity: equal or greater profuſion: more impetuous paſſions. Amorous from complexion, and formed by nature to ſucceed in gallantry, he ſet no bounds, he drew no veil before his exceſſes. Though married very early to Valentina of Milan, a princeſs of genius, beauty and accompliſhments, and who was moſt tenderly attached to him, he indulged himſelf in all the libertiniſm of debauchery, and after the madneſs of his brother, entered into connections with the queen, which there is every reaſon to ſuppoſe were criminal and inceſtuous. His ambition was however diſappointed for the preſent, and the ſtates, being aſſembled in this critical emergency, conferred the adminiſtration of affairs on the duke of Burgundy.——Meanwhile the wretched king recovered in ſome degree his health and intellects, when another accident, ſcarce leſs extraordinary than thoſe which firſt deprived him of them, again produced a fatal relapſe. As it ſhews the nature of the diverſions of the court in that uncultivated age, I ſhall relate it.

At a ball which was given in honour of the marriage of one of the queen's attendants, the king

king danced; a band of maſques entered the apartment, linked together with chains, and habited as bears. The duke of Orleans, willing to regard them cloſely, took a flambeau in his hand, and holding it too near, unhappily ſet fire to their habits, which being covered with pitch were inſtantly in a blaze: three of them were burned to death: the room was all in flames; every one anxious for their own preſervation forgot the king, and he was on the point of being involved in this diſmal cataſtrophe, when the dutcheſs of Berri, with infinite preſence of mind, wrapt him in her manteau, and preſerved him from the danger.—This rude ſhock produced a ſecond acceſs of frenzy, and, as the ideas of magic and ſorcery were univerſally received in thoſe times, the people imputed it to charms and incantations. After all the arts of medicine then known were exhauſted, recourſe was had to magicians, proceſſions, and faſts——but the malady was incurable, and accompanied the unhappy monarch, though with intervals of reaſon, to the tomb.

The government during the ſucceeding years preſents a frightful picture. The diſcordant intereſts and contending parties of the two dukes of Orleans and Burgundy, grew up into factions of the moſt rancorous and inveterate animoſity. The people were loaded with exactions the moſt oppreſſive. Order, œconomy, public glory, and internal tranquillity, had fled from

from France. The wiſe laws and ſalutary edicts of Charles the fifth were obliterated, or counteracted, and the kingdom, involved in calamity, was only preſerved from a renewal of the Engliſh invaſions by ſimilar evils, which prevented and retarded them.

In his intervals of recovery, Charles was carried as a pageant to ſpectacles of ſtate; he met the Engliſh prince (Richard the ſecond) near Calais, where they formed an unnatural alliance between this latter and Iſabella, daughter to Charles, only ſeven years of age, and which was never conſummated. A year or two afterwards he was brought to Rheims, to receive Wenceſlaus the emperor. That brutal and deſpicable monarch, whom his ſubjects, weary of his exceſſes, juſtly depoſed, amid the ſplendor of his reception, gave proofs of a ſubjection to his appetites the moſt unreſtrained and debaſed. When the dukes of Berri and Bourbon came in the morning to carry him to a banquet, to which the king had previouſly invited him, they found him vomiting the wine he had drank, and incapacitated, by drunkenneſs, for the entertainment*.

When

* Theſe viſits of ſovereign princes to each other were common in that age. Charles the fourth, emperor of Germany, made one to Charles the fifth of France, at Paris, and was magnificently received.—Wenceſlaus being totally incapable, from drunkenneſs, of waiting on the king, was regaled by him the following day, when he exerted the greateſt effort of reſtraint and ſelf-denial over his appetites, in not intoxicating himſelf before dinner. The feſtivities and debaucheries of the two monarchs

When Charles relapſed into madneſs, * he was violent and untractable: he could not ſupport the queen's preſence, and often proceeded even to ſtrike her. Valentina ducheſs of Orleans alone was acceptable to him; and as her appearance always calmed his agitations, and produced on him thoſe effects, of which even lunatics are ſuſceptible towards an object beloved, ſhe became deteſtable to the people; who imputed all theſe ſymptoms and changes to magical powers, which ſhe was ſuppoſed to have uſed to deſtroy the king. — The adminiſtration mean while fluctuated between the rival factions: that of Orleans gained a ſhort aſcendant, which was abuſed to ſuch ſevere oppreſſion, that

monarchs rekindled Charles's madneſs, and neceſſitated him to break up the interview, and return to the capital.

* The picture which Jean Juvenal des Urſins, (a cotemporary writer of great credit,) has given of the king's unhappy malady, is ſo ſimple and touching, that I cannot diſpenſe with inſerting it. It will excite commiſeration very highly.

" C'étoit grande pitié de la maladie du Roi, et ne connoiſſoit " perſonne quélconque. Lui-même ſe deconnoiſſoit, et diſoit " que ce n'étoit il pas. On lui amenoit la Reine, et ſembloit " qu'il ne l'eut oncques vue; et n'en avoit point memoire, ne " connoiſſance, ne d'hommes ou de femmes quelconques, ex- " cepté de la ducheſſe d'Orleans; car il la voyoit et regardoit " très volontiers, et l'appelloit belle ſœur. Et comme ſouvent " il y a de mauvaiſes langues, on diſoit, et publioient aucuns, " qu'elle l'avoit enſorcelé par le moyen de ſon Pere le duc de " Milan, qui étoit Lombard, et que en ſon pays on uſoit de telles " choſes; et l'une de plus dolentes et couroucées qui y fut, " c'étoit la ducheſſe d'Orleans, et n'eſt à croire ou preſumer " qu'elle eut voulu faire ou penſer."

It appears by this account, with what contempt he treated the popular prejudices againſt the ducheſs of Orleans.

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the Burgundian party regained the ſuperiority; when the king, emerging from one of his long fits of inſanity, and influenced by the cries of his people, deprived both the dukes of all authority, which he principally veſted in the queen and council.

The two factions, confirmed by perpetual competition, were tranſmitted to ſucceeding generations. Philip duke of Burgundy died in Brabant, and his ſon John, ſurnamed "Sans Peur," ſucceeded to his ample territories, to his place and pretenſions. He had all that magnificence and princely ſplendor in his character which ſo peculiarly diſtinguiſhed the houſe of Burgundy, and ſeemed hereditary in the line. His intrepidity and love of power were not inferior to his munificence; and the turbulent chaos of government in the court, ſoon gave him an opportunity to renew the ſcenes which had been acted under his father.

Charles, relapſed again into the horrors of his former condition, could oppoſe no barrier to the oppreſſions or malverſations of thoſe who poſſeſſed themſelves of his authority. Iſabella and the duke of Orleans had entered into connections of the moſt intimate nature, and divided between them the regal power. The clamours of the Pariſians, ſcandalized at an union ſo apparently perſonal and unjuſtifiable, and driven to deſpair by the unprecedented rapacity exerciſed over them, recalled the Burgundian, and he was received with acclamations. He took his ſeat in

in the council: the queen and duke retired to Melun, and left the field to their competitor.

John neglected not the occaſion to confirm his influence.—He affianced his daughter to the young dauphin Louis: he affected an attention to the unhappy king, whom his wife and brother had ſhamefully abandoned to want and naſtineſs during his fits *. He gained the people by an alleviation of the impoſts: and a mock reconciliation at laſt took place, on which the queen returned to Paris, and the two dukes embracing, heard maſs together, and ſwore on the ſacraments an eternal oblivion of paſt animoſities.

Thoſe who know human nature well, will not be ſurpriſed to find the duke of Orleans's aſſaſſination following almoſt immediately theſe marks of diſſembled friendſhip. He was returning from the hotel de St. Pol, where he had ſpent the evening with Iſabella, who was newly recovered from a lying-in. The duke rode on a mule, accompanied only by two or three valets: it was night: a Norman gentleman, whom revenge for the loſs of a poſt of which he had deprived him, ſtimulated to the attempt, ſurrounded him with eighteen aſſaſſins

* Juvenal des Urſins draws a frightful and almoſt incredible picture of Charles the ſixth's miſerable condition in his acceſſes of frenzy. The governante of the royal children avowed to him in one of his lucid intervals, that ſhe frequently had not wherewithall to feed or cloath them.—"Alas!" anſwered the king, with a ſigh, "I am myſelf no better treated."—He held in his hand a golden cup, in which he had juſt drank, and this he gave to her for the ſupply of his children's neceſſities.

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in the "rue Barbette." He cut off his hand with the firſt blow of a battle-ax; at the ſecond he tumbled him from his mule, and with the third he opened his ſcull, leaving him dead on the ground. All the troop then made their eſcape, and took refuge in the duke of Burgundy's palace.

The motives to this deteſtable crime are ſomewhat ambiguous and obſcure: the French hiſtorians ſay they were more perſonal than political. The gallantries of the duke of Orleans were notorious; and it is pretended, that he had not only profited of the ducheſs of Burgundy's favours, but had even the temerity and inſolence to brave the unfortunate huſband, by introducing him into a cabinet hung with the portraits of thoſe women he had enjoyed, among which his own wife held a diſtinguiſhed place *. To what-

* Duhaillan aſſigns this amour as the cauſe of his murder; and Brantome confirms it as the tradition of his time. Theſe are his words:

"Louis duc d'Orleans, aieul de Louis douze, s'étant vanté "tout haut dans un banquet ou étoit le duc Jean de Bourgogne "ſon couſin, qu'il avoit en ſon cabinet les portraits des plus belles "dames dont il avoit joui; par cas fortuit, un jour le duc Jean "entrant dans ce cabinet, la premiere dame qu'il vit pourtraite, "et ſe preſenta du premier aſpect devant ſes yeux, ce fut ſa no-"ble dame et épouſe, qu'on tenoit de ce temps très belle."

Yet Olivier de la Marche, in his memoirs declares, that the duke of Burgundy, too credulous, haſtily believed an information given him, that Louis duke of Orleans had plotted to aſſaſſinate him, and reſolving to anticipate the blow, cauſed him to be put to death. On that night he had ſpent part of the evening with Iſabella. About ſeven o'clock, one of the king's valets de chambre came to inform the duke, that his majeſty wiſhed to ſee him immediately on an affair of importance: he went out, accom-

whatever cauſe it be aſcribed, the kingdom long felt its pernicious conſequences, and the perpetrator met with an exact retribution many years afterwards on the bridge of Montereau.

To give a picture of the reign of Charles the ſixth, from this æra to the battle of Azincourt, is to enumerate a ſeries of proſcriptions, maſſacres, and barbarities almoſt unparalleled in any century. Marius or Sylla never exerciſed more unrelenting vengeance over their vanquiſhed enemies in antient Rome, than did the Armagnacs and Burgundians, as they triumphed by turns in Paris. Two thouſand citizens periſhed in one carnage.

The young duke of Orleans, only ſixteen years old, ſucceeded to his father's place, and loudly demanded vengeance for his murder. Valentina, his mother, died for grief and diſappointed revenge, in the flower of her age. Iſabella, depriv-

accompanied only by two gentlemen, and ſome footmen who carried flambeaus. The Norman gentleman's name who headed the band, and diſpatched him, was Raoullet Ocquetouville: he had been one of the duke's retainers; and Louis having cauſed his name to be eraſed from the liſt of the officers of his houſehold, he determined on vengeance. The aſſaſſins, to elude purſuit, ſet on fire a neighbouring houſe, and ſcattered gins or traps in the ſtreets. The duke of Burgundy affected at firſt the utmoſt ſorrow for his couſin's death; he attended his funeral, lamented, and wept for him. But when it was reſolved in council to ſearch the houſes of all the princes and nobles, to diſcover the murderers, he was ſo troubled and terrified, that he took the duke of Bourbon aſide, and confeſſed to him that he was himſelf the author of the crime. The enſuing day he fled into Flanders with his aſſaſſins. Theſe are the chief and moſt intereſting particulars of that atrocious murder.

ed of her lover and her faithful partizan, retired from Paris overcome with terror, while the duke of Burgundy, too powerful to be amenable to puniſhment, not only avowed his crime, but even attempted to excuſe and juſtify it. The court, the capital, the kingdom, and the perſon of the ſovereign, were alternately ſeized on by the oppoſite leaders. Anarchy and uproar, and all the ſcourges of public diſcord, lorded it, unrepreſſed and unreſtrained.

The young dauphin, Louis, began to appear amid this ſcene of confuſion; but his character, fickle, inconſtant, diſſolute, and graſping at unlimited power, rather increaſed than repreſſed the accumulated evils of ſtate.

The king, as he regained from time to time ſome faint gleams of reaſon, was rendered ſubſervient to every purpoſe of the predominant faction; and was now the protector, and now the avenger of the duke of Burgundy. During his returns of inſanity, he was often indecently neglected, without table, without neceſſary finances, even almoſt without changes of habit. As he was generally obſtinate likewiſe, and difficult to manage at theſe times, a young and beautiful miſtreſs was procured for him, of whom he became enamoured, as he had been of the ducheſs Valentina, and who alone had any influence or command over him. *

Paris,

* Odette de Champdivers was daughter to a dealer in horſes: ſhe was young, lively, and beautiful. The queen herſelf firſt preſent-

Paris, long oppreſſed, became ſeditious; and as it had ſuffered ſo ſeverely from the abuſe of the royal power, attempted to repreſs and reduce it to narrower bounds.

Such was the deplorable condition of the kingdom, when the ſtorm which had long menaced, and which had been protracted by a chain of incidents, burſt at length.—Henry the fourth of England, who held his uſurpation by a tenure too precarious to engage in foreign wars, was dead; and a young prince to whom the crown deſcended by a ſort of hereditary preſcription, and gifted with all the qualities of a warrior and a general, ſaw and improved the opportunity. He revived the antiquated and ill-founded pretenſions of Edward to the crown of France: he landed in Normandy; and by the headſtrong impatience of his enemies, renewed at Azincourt the laurels won by his anceſtors under Philip and John. He retired into England, carrying with him the captive princes of the blood.

Conſternation and affright were ſuperadded

preſented her to Charles the ſixth: he was preſently enamoured of this new miſtreſs. Her authority over him was ſo great, in his fits of frenzy, that ſhe obtained the name of "La Petite "Reine;" under which title ſhe is commonly known in hiſtory. The unhappy king, when ſeized with madneſs, would often perſiſt to keep the ſame linen or ſheets, how dirty ſoever; nor could any perſon except Odette induce him to deſiſt from this reſolution. Charles cohabited with her, and even had by her a daughter named Margaret de Valois. Charles the ſeventh acknowledged her as his ſiſter, gave her a very ample portion, and married her to the Seigneur de Belleville in Poictou. Claude, the laſt of their deſcendants, was killed in the battle of Coutras, 1587.

to all the other convulſions of ſtate; and every calamity was heightened by this foreign invaſion. —At this juncture the dauphin Louis died. He promiſed no marks of happier times, nor can his death be regarded as a loſs to the kingdom. A dyſentery, occaſioned by his irregularities, probably carried him off, tho' poiſon was ſuſpected and pretended. His ſecond brother, John, ſucceeded to his rights.

This prince had been married to the duke of Burgundy's daughter, and was a zealous partizan of the faction; and as he too died within a year after the firſt dauphin, it has been with more reaſon ſuppoſed that violent and unnatural means were uſed for that purpoſe. The ſtory of his mother Iſabella having deſtroyed him by a poiſoned chain of gold which ſhe ſent him, is evidently falſe—but it is not equally clear, that Louis duke of Anjou, and king of Sicily, ſon to the regent who periſhed in Calabria, was not the author of his death. This prince had married his daughter to Charles duke of Touraine, youngeſt of the king's ſons, and who afterwards mounted the throne; and it is ſaid, that to facilitate the acceſſion of his ſon-in-law, he had not ſcrupled to remove both the elder brothers, who ſtood between him and the crown*.

Charles,

* Mezerai ſeems to declare Louis the firſt dauphin poiſoned. "Il tomba malade," ſays he, "d'un flux de ventre, dont il "mourut, non ſans des marques apparentes de poiſon." But he does not mention the perpetrators of this crime. It ſeems to be a fact much more univerſally eſtabliſhed, that John, duke of Tou-

Charles, born to reinſtate the monarchy, attacked on every ſide, had been educated in ſentiments of the utmoſt deteſtation of the duke of Burgundy, and for attachment to the houſe of Orleans. The queen his mother, who had now united her intereſt with the former, was therefore ſent by his approval and permiſſion under a guard to Tours, after he had executed a ſingular vengeance on one of her lovers, named Louis Bois-Bourdon; who was tied up in a ſack, and precipitated into the Seine, with this label annexed, "Laiſſez paſſer la juſtice du roi!" —— An outrage which Iſabella never pardoned him, and which ſhe ſeverely revenged!

The queen's impriſonment was of ſhort duration: ſhe was reſcued by the duke of Burgundy, and aſſumed the regency. It was pretended that ſhe had not leſs complaiſance for the murderer of the duke of Orleans, than ſhe had ſhewn to the duke himſelf: nor is there any difficulty in believing that a princeſs ever a ſlave to paſſions the moſt impetuous, and whoſe irregularity of manners was notorious, did not heſitate to gratify her protector and deliverer by every compliance with his wiſhes. Her age, which was about forty-ſix or forty-ſeven years at this time,

Touraine, ſecond dauphin, was put to death by unnatural means. Whether the king of Sicily was the author of it, can by no means be aſcertained; but his ambitious character juſtified the ſuſpicion. Even the duke of Burgundy was accuſed in the ſequel, but with much leſs reaſon or probability. He expired at the age of eighteen, at Compiegne in Picardy.

forms no objection; ſince ſhe is univerſally allowed to have poſſeſſed a beauty the moſt captivating and perfect *.

Meanwhile Henry the fifth landing again in Normandy, reduced all that fertile province under his ſubjection, unoppoſed by any enemy. The Burgundian party, once more triumphant, re-entered the capital in all the ſplendor of conqueſt; and took a vengeance the moſt ſanguinary on their opponents. The wretched king remained in their poſſeſſion, and ſcarce was the dauphin ſaved by Tannegui du Chaſtel. The Engliſh monarch, at the head of a victorious army, approached. He demanded Catherine of France, and the ſucceſſion to the kingdom, with the immediate inveſtiture of the regency under his father-in-law. Iſabella, deſperate, unnatural, deſtitute of every ſentiment of a mother or a queen, heſitated not to execute theſe ignominious and haughty demands. She even carried her daughter to Troyes with that intention—but the Burgundian prince, ſprung from the blood of France; nor yet loſt to the feelings of patriotiſm, of duty, and of public glory,

* The cotemporary writers in general accuſe the duke of Burgundy of criminal connections with the queen. He carried her off from the church of Marmoutier near Tours, and conducted her to Chartres. Pontus Heuterus, in his life of John, expreſsly mentions Iſabella as *one* of his miſtreſſes. Theſe are his words —"Mulieroſior patre multo fuit; viva enim uxore, *pellices* non "ignobiles habuit, quorum facile princeps extremis vitæ tem-"poribus, Giaci fuit domina (de Giac) *ipſaque regis Caroli ſex-"ti uxor*, non ſatis bene audivit."

pauſed

pauſed at this fatal ſtep. He ſaw its almoſt certain and irremediable conſequences: he determined to fruſtrate them ere too late. An accommodation with the dauphin might yet retrieve the falling ſtate; Charles invited and implored him to it: Every principle of virtue demanded it.

An interview was agreed on at the bridge of Montereau-ſur-Yonne; in this, a total amneſty of paſt crimes, murders and animoſities was to take place on both ſides, and a coalition of arms and intereſts to ſucceed.—But whether the duke dreaded the vengeance of his couſin's death; or whether he ſuſpected the dauphin's ſincerity, he did not come to the place of rendezvous till after he had been waited for fifteen days. It is ſaid his miſtreſs, the lady of Gyac, by an ungenerous treachery, perſuaded him at length to venture. Every precaution was taken to inſure his ſafety: a barrier was erected on the bridge; he placed his guard at one end, and advancing with ten attendants, threw himſelf on his knees before the dauphin. At that inſtant Tannegui du Chaſtel making the ſignal, leaped the barrier with ſome others, and giving him the firſt blow, he was almoſt immediately diſpatched. Though Charles was only a paſſive ſpectator of this aſſaſſination, yet it cannot be doubted that he was privy to its commiſſion; nor does his unripe age, though it may palliate, exculpate him from the infamy of ſuch a participation,

ſince he continued his protection and favour to its perpetrators *.

Never was any action more fatal to France. Iſabella, loud in her exclamations, and bent on the deſtruction of her ſon, called for immediate vengeance.—Philip, who ſucceeded his father in the dukedom of Burgundy, was compelled to eſpouſe her cauſe by every principle of filial piety and juſt reſentment. They reſolved on a marriage between Catherine, and the Engliſh monarch. It was ſolemnized at Troyes; and ſhe brought the kingdom in dowry to her huſband.

By an unexampled and aſtoniſhing concurrence of circumſtances, a foreign prince was on the point of being ſeated on the throne of France. The dauphin, unable to reſiſt ſo powerful a

* There is a certain veil of uncertainty and darkneſs drawn over this foul tranſaction. The partizans of Charles the ſeventh pretend, that John had intended to execute as bloody and perfidious a vengeance on him at the bridge of Montereau, as he had done on the duke of Orleans ſome years before at Paris: but there is little probability in this aſſertion. Juvenal des Urſins expreſsly ſays, "Que la dame de Giac, maitreſſe du duc, fut "celle qui le determina à ſe trouver à cette entrevue." If the ſolicitations of his miſtreſs were requiſite to induce him to go to the interview, it is not poſſible to ſuſpect him of a premeditated deſign to murder the dauphin. Tannegui du Chaſtel, and John Louvet preſident of Provence, were the duke's inveterate and mortal enemies. To delude him more perfectly, the caſtle of Montereau was delivered into his poſſeſſion, but deſtitute either of proviſions or engines of defence. The duke came down on the bridge with ten attendants. In the poſture he was on his knees, it was not difficult to diſpatch him. Of the perſons who accompanied him, only Archembaud de Foix, Seigneur de Noailles, attempted to defend his lord. He periſhed with him at the ſame moment. It ſeems impoſſible to acquit Charles of a participation in this crime.

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combination, retired ſouthward, and began to fortify himſelf in the provinces beyond the Loire. Henry was proclaimed regent, and even took upon him the exerciſe of the regal power, which the maladies of Charles incapacitated him to uſe. The defeat and death of his brother, the duke of Clarence, at Bauge in Anjou, only protracted for a moment the deſtruction of the dauphin. The Engliſh prince returning from his own kingdom, prepared to puſh him to the laſt extremities: he was declared guilty of the duke of Burgundy's murder, ſummoned to a ſolemn trial, and diſinherited from the ſucceſſion.

Henry himſelf began his march from Paris, armed with the united forces of France and Burgundy.—The moment approached of young Charles's inevitable ruin——when by one of thoſe extraordinary incidents which decide the fate of nations, Henry, the fortunate and the victorious, expired in the flower of youth. As far as human foreſight can determine from appearances; had he lived—or even had the ſucceſſion deſcended to his brother the duke of Bedford—the family of Valois would have been overwhelmed by ſuch a multiplicity of concomitant evils, and an Engliſh uſurper eſtabliſhed his authority over France.—But by his death the miſerable kingdom had time to recover. An infant at the breaſt ſucceeded to the two crowns; and the dauphin, re-aſcending by ſlow degrees the hill of fortune, reſtored his declining affairs.

The death of Henry the fifth was wondrouſ-

ly critical. The miſerable Charles, his father-in-law, ſurvived him only ſix-and-fifty days. He breathed his laſt in the hotel de St. Pol at Paris, attended in his dying moments by a ſingle gentleman of the bed-chamber, a confeſſor, and an almoner. No funeral honours were paid him; no prince of the blood attended his proceſſion; and the abandoned wretchedneſs which marked almoſt his whole life, attended him to the tomb where he was depoſited.

Here let us pauſe a moment! A mind philoſophic and reflective, which views with equal and impartial eye the changes of human affairs, and revolutions of empires;—which regards all thoſe effects or phænomena, imputed by the multitude to ſupernatural and extraordinary interpoſitions, as regularly flowing from fixed and ſtated cauſes;—which, comprehenſive in its ſurvey, enlarged in its conceptions, forms a juſt and ſolid eſtimate of things:—ſuch a ſpectator will find, at this remarkable æra of the French monarchy, ample field for ſpeculation; and will allow the juſtice of that obſervation of the Tacitus of the eighteenth century, "That there is "in all governments an ultimate point of de-"preſſion and of elevation, at which affairs re-"vert, and return in a contrary direction."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Political condition of France.—Character of John duke of Bedford.—Acceſſion and diſtreſſes of Charles the ſeventh.—Appearance of the maid of Orleans.—Character of Agnes Soreille.—Deaths of the queen dowager, and duke of Bedford.—Louis the dauphin's treaſonable practices, and flight.—Death of Agnes Soreille.—Circumſtances of it.—Engliſh ultimately driven out of France.—Dauphin's diſobedience.—Oppreſſions, and retreat into Burgundy.—Charles's fruitleſs attempts to gain poſſeſſion of his perſon.—The king's illneſs.—Death.—Character.

THERE is perhaps no point of time in the hiſtory of France more intereſting to an Engliſh reader, than that where the laſt chapter concluded. The death of Henry the fifth, arreſted in the very moment when he prepared to overwhelm the dauphin; and that of Charles the ſixth, by which the crown devolved to his ſon; ſeemed to be events ſo important, and big with conſequences, that a change the moſt ſudden and rapid was to be expected from them.—But though the former of theſe incidents left the reduction of France incomplete and unfiniſhed, it did not abſolutely render it abortive. In John duke of Bedford, left regent of the two kingdoms, ſurvived the ſpirit of his brother Henry. Even the colours under which he is depic-

depictured to us by the French hiſtorians, figure a prince worthy of the great truſt repoſed in him, and capable of all the toils of empire. He had juſt attained the prime of manhood; nor could the tutelage of his infant nephew, who was ſtill at the breaſt, have been conſigned to more virtuous and able hands. Iſabella, the declared enemy of her ſon; and Philip duke of Burgundy, reduced by a fatal neceſſity to turn his arms againſt the protector of his father's murderers, encreaſed his power: all the northern provinces, and Guyenne, were already reduced under ſubjection.

Charles, on the other hand, retired into the fortreſſes of the Cevennes, or the mountains of Auvergne; not yet arrived to years of majority, and only attended by ſome princes of the blood, and a few brave adventurers animated by conſiderations of loyalty and love to their expiring country, could only make a feeble oppoſition to ſuch powerful enemies. On the news of his father's death, he was ſaluted king by his little band of adherents, and even crowned at Poitiers*; but to ſo extreme penury was he reduced, that even the affectionate fidelity of his queen, who ſold all her plate and jewels for his

* The Dauphin Charles, ſays Mezerai, was at the caſtle d'Eſpailly, near Puy, in Auvergne, when he received the news of his father's death. On the firſt day he wore mourning; the enſuing one he dreſſed himſelf in ſcarlet, and after having heard maſs, he ordered the banner of France to be elevated in the chapel. The nobles who adhered to him, then ſaluted him ſovereign, with loud acclamations of "Vive le roi!"

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ſubſiſtence, ſcarce ſufficed to provide for the immediate wants of his dreſs and table; and he was driven to diſtreſſes only equalled by thoſe which Mary of Medicis, and Henrietta queen of England underwent during their exile in the laſt century.

During the firſt ſix years of his reign, the Engliſh arms were almoſt uniformly triumphant; and though he gained over to his party the celebrated Arthur count de Richemont, brother to the duke of Bretagne; yet this imperious chieftain, rough and ferocious in his manners, treated his ſovereign with the moſt mortifying indignity; and unſheathed the ſword of conſtable, not only againſt his opponents, but againſt his deareſt favourites, whom he ſtabbed or drowned even in the royal preſence *.

The little court of Charles was torn by inteſtine factions; and he would doubtleſs have been himſelf the victim of ſo many calamities, if ſimilar or fiercer diſſentions had not ariſen between the two dukes of Burgundy and Gloceſ-

* The conſtable firſt compelled the king to renounce and baniſh Louvet, and Tannegui du Chaſtel, to both of whom he was moſt warmly attached. The Seigneur de Gyac, who ſucceeded to their place in Charles's favour and affections, he ſeized by force at Iſſoudun in Berri, while in bed, and after ſome ſhort forms of pretended juſtice, cauſed him to be drowned.---- Only a few months afterwards, he executed a ſimilar vengeance on the Camus de Beaulieu, another gentleman obnoxious to his diſpleaſure, and acceptable to the king. The court was at Poitiers; and the marechal de Bouſſac, by order of the count de Richemont, killed the unhappy favourite in the ſtreet, and almoſt under his maſter's eye.

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ter, on the ſubject of the beautiful Jacqueline counteſs of Hainault. In vain did Bedford, animated only by motives of the moſt patriotic and glorious nature, implore his brother to deſiſt from his unjuſt pretenſions. In vain did he repreſent to him the intereſts of their common prince and nephew; and point out to him that the moment was arrived to extinguiſh for ever the race of Valois.—Gloceſter was deaf to his entreaties or expoſtulations; and that preciſe juncture in the affairs of human life, which if paſſed, rarely or never returns, was irrecoverably loſt. The regent, notwithſtanding, though almoſt unſupported by his allies, maintained the war: he found reſources in his own character, in his popularity, his affability, his munificence, and clemency of adminiſtration, which had attached to him even the Pariſians.

The Engliſh were animated by a long train of ſucceſs, commanded by experienced leaders, and oppoſed to troops diſpirited and ſinking under adverſe fortune. The memorable ſiege of Orleans was undertaken. Though Dunois, the immortal baſtard of Orleans, exerted every effort of valour and conduct againſt the beſiegers, it was vigorouſly preſſed. Charles already began to meditate a retreat into Dauphiné, and all ſeemed to conſpire for his deſtruction; when an occurrence the moſt ſingular in the records of hiſtory, turned the current in his favour, and reſtored him to the throne of his anceſtors.—I mean the appearance of Joan d'Arc. A village girl,

girl, either inſtigated by an enthuſiaſtic apprehenſion of ſupernatural aſſiſtance, or inſtructed to feign ſuch a belief, quits her obſcurity in Lorrain, and goes to find the king at Chinon.

However we may ſuppoſe Joan herſelf to have been perſuaded of her divine miſſion, it is ſcarce poſſible to imagine that Charles and his courtiers accepted her offers from any other motive, than that of trying an extraordinary and deſperate remedy, in the preſent diſorders of the ſtate. The age was ignorant, credulous, barbarous, and ſuperſtitious to a high degree: it was exactly adapted to their apprehenſions and religious terrors; and while the count de Dunois really commanded, Joan, unfurling the ſacred ſtandard, headed the troops choſen to ſuccour the city. It ſucceeded even beyond expectation. Like another Gideon, armed with ethereal protection, ſhe attacked enemies already diſmayed with fears, and obtained an eaſy conqueſt.

Not content with raiſing the ſiege of Orleans, and animated by the fortunate iſſue of her firſt eſſay in arms, ſhe puſhed her views to the greateſt length. One combat prepared the way for a ſecond; and ſtill advancing through provinces which had been totally in the power of the Engliſh, ſhe led her royal votary to Rheims, and ſaw him ſolemnly inaugurated.

The perfidy, or the imprudence of the governor of Compeigne, delivered her at length into the hands of her adverſaries. Even then

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ſhe behaved, though defenceleſs, and menaced with death, in a manner becoming a heroine. Her enthuſiaſm and reliance on ſuperior aid ſupported her courage—for Charles, who had derived all thoſe benefits he wanted from ſuch an engine, made no effort to procure her releaſe; and a barbarous reſentment, unworthy and unbecoming generous minds, prompted the Engliſh, who had ſuffered ſo ſeverely from her proweſs, to take a cruel and inhuman revenge.

Meanwhile, though the duke of Bedford, in the hope of re-animating his depreſſed countrymen, cauſed young Henry to be crowned at Paris, the war languiſhed on both ſides, from their incapacity of exerting freſh efforts. Charles, naturally voluptuous, fond of pleaſures, and a ſlave to beauty, had gladly quitted the fatigues of a camp to indulge his ſofter paſſions. His heart, ſuſceptible of love, had found an object ſupremely capable of exciting it, in the celebrated Agnes Soreille. She was born at a village of Fromenteau, near Loches, in Tourain. Her perſonal attractions, which are repreſented by all the cotemporary hiſtorians, as the moſt touching and ſeductive, were equalled by the delicacy and gaiety of her imagination. She was worthy the lover ſhe poſſeſſed, becauſe, during all the unlimited influence which her charms procured her over him, ſhe never forgot he was a king, nor ſacrificed his glory and intereſts to the effeminate gratifications of appetite. On the contrary, when immerſed in indolent and

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ſupine inaction, ſhe is ſaid to have rouſed him from his lethargy, and excited him to atchievements worthy his birth and dignity *.

The treaty concluded at Arras between Charles and the duke of Burgundy, who had long fluctuated in uncertainty, and yielded at length to ſentiments of generous forgiveneſs, was a mortal wound to the Engliſh affairs. Iſabella, who had been long an object of infamy and public deteſtation, expired of ſorrow and conſternation at this unwelcome news *; and the regent,

* The year of her birth was about 1409. She had attained her twenty-ſecond year when ſhe firſt appeared at court, in the ſervice of Iſabella queen of Naples and Sicily. From that princeſs ſhe paſſed into the train of Mary, Charles's queen. Her favour was during ſome time cloſely concealed, and only divulged by the promotion of all her relations to offices and dignities. "Acceſſit ad ſtupri ſuſpicionem propinquorum Agnetis "ad dignitates eccleſiaſticas repentina promotio," ſays Gaguin, in his life of Charles the ſeventh.

Her mind was elevated and noble. She ever attempted to inſpire the king with a thirſt of glory, and a wiſh to recover his dominions from the Engliſh, Francis the firſt honoured and cheriſhed her memory. The four elegant lines which that great prince made on her, are well known.

"Gentille Agnes, plus d'honneur tu merite,
"La cauſe étant de France recouvrer!
"Que ce que peut dans un cloitre ouvrer
"Clauſe Nonain, ou bien devote hermite.

* Iſabella of Bavaria, one of the worſt queens who has reigned in France, ſurvived the unhappy Charles the ſixth, her huſband, about thirteen years. John Boucher, a writer not far removed from the time in which ſhe lived, relates her death very minutely in his Annales d' Aquitaine.—— "Incontinent "après le traité d'Arras (ſays he) Madame Yſabeau de Bavier, "veuve du feu roi Charles 6, qui avoit été longuement entre "les mains des Anglois en grande indigence et pauvreté, fut "averti

regent, whoſe maſterly and judicious policy had alone hitherto preſerved the diclining affairs of his country, in that ſwift decay to which they apparently haſtened, followed ſoon after.

The Pariſians received their native prince into his capital with acclamations; and Charles, after long oppoſing a ſea of troubles, began to taſte the pleaſures of conqueſt and tranquillity. The condition of France was, notwithſtanding, at this period the moſt deplorable and wretched. It preſented a renewal of the ſad ſcenes which had been exhibited under John, and in the firſt years of Charles the fifth. A diſorder in the provinces, approaching to anarchy.—The calami-

" averti du dit accord et appointment, et en mourut de douleur " en l'hotel du roi, près St. Paul à Paris; et fut ſon corps mené " à St. Denis, et enterré en la chapelle des rois, près du feu " Charles 6 ſon mari. Elle n'eut que quatres cierges, et qua- " tres perſonnes à ſon enterrement. Ce fut grand' honte aux " Angelois, qui l'avoient en leurs mains, qu'ils ne lui firent " aucun honneur à ſes exeques."

Her ſon, Charles the ſeventh, being born at the time when her intimacy with Louis duke of Orleans was carried to the greateſt length, gave ſome probability to the report that he was the offſpring of their inceſtuous amours. It is ſaid that even the Engliſh, whom ſhe had ſo highly obliged, at the expence of honour, nature, and affection, were ſo ungenerous as to reproach her with this humiliating circumſtance. Mezerai ſays, " Ils " prenoient plaiſir de lui dire en face que le roi Charles n'étoit " pas fils de ſon mari." ----Gaguin uſes nearly the ſame words: " Nulla re magis irritata, quam quod Carolum regem, ejus fi- " lium inceſto concubitu natum Anglus diffamabat."

Her funerals were meaner than thoſe of an ordinary gentlewoman. Her body was carried in a little boat on the Seine to St. Denis, attended only by four perſons; and the prior of St. Denis performed the ſervice, not a prelate being preſent, or any ſolemnities paid to her remains.

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ties of war were followed by the ſcourge of peſtilence and famine.—The ſoldiery, unemployed during the frequent truces which took place between the two crowns, ravaged the poſſeſſions of the defenceleſs peaſants. As yet the regal power was not ſufficiently confirmed, to extend any permanent and effectual remedy to theſe evils; and as Charles appears principally to have reſided in the royal chateaus on the Loire, or in Berri, Paris is ſaid to have been ſo depopulated and abandoned, that the wolves ventured even into the middle of the "rue St. Antoine," and carried off the children of the citizens.—A circumſtance, which if true, indicates a ſtate of the moſt dreadful and complete miſery!

The paſſionate deſire of redreſſing theſe national diſtreſſes, induced the king to hold out terms of pacification to the Engliſh, neither inglorious or diſadvantageous. The two rich provinces of Normandy and Guyenne were offered them, under condition of homage. Sound policy ſhould have induced and dictated a compliance with theſe ceſſions——but Bedford was no more. Henry, the weakeſt prince who ever held a ſceptre, meek and ſuperſtitious, was ill qualified to guide the helm of ſtate, in conjunctures delicate and critical. The factions of Wincheſter and Gloceſter tore the court; and the nation, accuſtomed to triumph in every preceding conteſt with France, and ſtill ſupported by the recollection of Henry's and Edward's trophies, knew not how to adopt a temporiſing

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and more humiliating tone. Though a ſuſpenſion of arms was accepted for ſome years, they did not recede from their ancient and ill-founded pretenſions on the kingdom.

Meanwhile France ſaw expire the inveterate animoſity and hereditary hatred of the two houſes of Burgundy and Orleans. The firſt of theſe princes, by an effort of magnanimity and greatneſs of ſoul rarely found among men; deſirous to bury in oblivion the unhappy diſſentions of his father, reſtored the duke of Orleans, who had languiſhed in a captivity of five-and-twenty years, ever ſince the battle of Azincourt, to liberty, by paying his ranſom, which amounted to the enormous ſum of three hundred thouſand ecus. They met at Gravelines, embraced, and interchanged a mutual forgiveneſs.

During the tranquillity of the peace, Charles, occupied in the purſuits of love, in banquets, gardens, and the pleaſures of the chace, indulged his natural inclination for theſe gentler recreations, and forgot the toils of war. The beautiful Agnes poſſeſſed an unlimited influence over him.—But deſtined, like his unhappy ſucceſſor, Henry the fourth, after having vanquiſhed his foreign enemies, to find more cruel ones in his own houſehold; fortune had prepared in his ſon a ſource of diſquietude more ſharp and afflictive than any external ones could prove. Louis, the deteſtable and malignant Louis, his eldeſt ſon, had already attained his twenty-ſecond year, though the king was ſtill in the vigour of his age.

When

When only ſixteen, he had rebelled againſt his father, who forgave his miſconduct. Such lenity was loſt on his obdurate and unfeeling mind. Diſcontented, and anxious to anticipate his power, he refuſed ſubjection, and proceeded to inſults the moſt irritating and criminal.—An incident, which, as it peculiarly marks his character, I ſhall relate, happened at this time.

A perſon of the court had offended the dauphin: determined on revenge, he bargained with the count de Dammartin to aſſaſſinate him; but the count, being diſſuaded from the perpetration of ſo mean and daſtardly a crime by his brother, refuſed to execute it. The affair came to the king's knowledge, who ſeverely reprimanded his ſon. Louis, to cover his own guilt, accuſed the count of having ſuggeſted to him the means; but Dammartin, jealous of his wounded honour, not only denied the accuſation in the royal preſence; but offered, according to the laws of chivalry, to juſtify himſelf from the imputation, in ſingle combat, againſt any of the dauphin's train. Charles, whoſe character was peculiarly open, generous, and candid, ſaw and abhorred the malignity of his ſon: he even ordered him to quit his preſence, and not appear at court for four months. The dauphin obeyed, but not without menaces; and retired into Dauphiné, from whence he returned no more till the king's death.

The war between France and England, which had ſlumbered for ſeveral years, at length waked

waked again; but conqueſt, which during the beginning of Charles's reign hung dubious, now declared uniformly in his favour. He attacked Normandy, undertook the ſiege of Rouen in perſon, and re-entered it in triumph. The gallant count de Dunois ſeconded his ſovereign's efforts, and in a few months the whole province was finally re-annexed to the crown, from which Henry the fifth had diſmembered it.

The pleaſure which Charles felt from this important and victorious campaign, was ſaddened by the loſs of his beloved miſtreſs. She expired of a dyſentery, at the abbey of Jumieges, near Rouen; to which place ſhe had come to meet the king, and to inform him of a conſpiracy againſt his perſon. Though the cotemporary authors expreſs themſelves with a ſtudied ambiguity on this event, there is great reaſon to believe that the dauphin was concerned in the plot; and even that Agnes's death was the effect of poiſon adminiſtered by his expreſs command. The king tenderly and paſſionately lamented her: ſhe was one of the beſt and greateſt miſtreſſes which any of the French princes have poſſeſſed. Madame de Villequier, her niece, by a ſort of inheritance in gallantry, ſucceeded to her place and favour *.

The

* Agnes Soreille was created, by Charles the ſeventh, counteſs of Penthievre, and lady of Beauté ſur Marne. She was in her fortieth year when ſhe died; and left three daughters by the king. Charlotte the eldeſt was married to Jacques de Brezé, count de Maulevrier; her death was truly deplorable. She is ſaid

The reduction of Normandy was only a prelude to new acquiſitions: the king, animated by his paſt ſucceſs, reſolved to improve the favourable moment, and to attempt what his grandfather's untimely and lamented death had then prevented—the entire rout of the Engliſh, and their extirpation from his dominions. All Guienne and Gaſcony was ſtill in their poſſeſſion: the inhabitants, governed during ſeveral centuries by them, were affectionate to theſe foreign maſters; and a very vigorous defence might yet have been made—but civil and inteſtine confuſion aided Charles's arms. The bloody quarrel between the contending Roſes, which deluged the kingdom with ſlaughter, was already on the point of commencing. No ſuccours were ſent, no timely aid afforded them. Four armies, commanded by the ableſt generals of France, entered theſe provinces, and made a progreſs the moſt fortunate and rapid: only one effort was exerted for their preſervation by the

ſaid to have equalled her mother in beauty; but an attachment which her huſband diſcovered, proved her ruin. Jean de Troyes has related the circumſtances of it: they are ſo affecting that I ſhall inſert them without any alteration:---" Elle étoit allé à la " chaſſe avec lui; à leur retour chacun ſe retiroit dans ſon ap- " partement; Brezé fut averti que ſa femme s'étoit retirée avec " Pierre de la Vergne, ſon veneur: il prend ſon epée, fait bri- " ſer la porte, trouve la Vergne en chemiſe, et le tue. Sa femme " s'alla cacher ſous la couverture d'un lit ou étoient couchés ſes " enfans. Il la tira du lit, et lui plongea ſon épée dans le Sein: " elle étoit à genoux; elle tomba morte." Louis the eleventh obliged the count de Maulevrier to purchaſe a remiſſion of this crime, by an enormous pecuniary amende.

great

great Talbot and his ſon, who periſhed in the battle of Caſtillon. Bourdeaux and Bayonne opened their gates to the conqueror; and Charles the ſeventh, who had acceded to the crown under circumſtances the moſt diſtreſsful and deplorable, yet effected what neither the policy or courage of his anceſtors had been able to produce.

But if the Monarch was victorious and happy, the Father was deſtined to experience a different fate. His ungrateful and unnatural ſon became his moſt implacable enemy. Several years had elapſed ſince his departure from court; the king had frequently commanded him to return, but in vain. His conqueſts over the Engliſh had even been impeded, and ſtopped in the midway, by a dangerous inſurrection of the dauphin and duke of Savoy. Superadded to this, his exactions and oppreſſions in Dauphiné, where he exerciſed a ſort of unlimited and royal power, were grown inſupportable. Charles, irritated by ſuch diſobedience, and weary of his continued miſconduct, commiſſioned the count de Dammartin to ſeize his perſon. That nobleman, whom he had formerly affronted in the tendereſt part, proceeded inſtantly to the execution of the mandate; but Louis, who had received timely intelligence of the deſign, ſaved himſelf by a precipitate flight into Franche Comté, from whence he continued his route into Brabant.

The

The duke of Burgundy, either influenced by motives of generoſity and courteſy, or from policy, received, and afforded him an aſylum. He aſſigned him a penſion of twelve thouſand ecus, and gave him the Chateau de Gueneppe near Bruſſels, for his reſidence. Here he endeavoured at firſt to amuſe and divert his unquiet mind by the ſtudy of aſtrology, to which he was ever immoderately addicted; but afterwards, with that malevolent duplicity which ſo ſtrongly marked his character; and in deſpite of all the benefits which the houſe of Burgundy had heaped upon him, he attempted to ſow the ſeeds of diſcontent and quarrel between the duke and his ſon, the count de Charolois, in which he ſucceeded but too well.

The king tried in vain by every means to induce the duke of Burgundy to deliver up the dauphin. By a prediction founded on his knowledge of Louis, and juſtified in his future conduct, he warned him that he was nouriſhing a ſerpent, which when warmed would ſtrike his deadly fangs into the boſom of its protector. He even once was on the point of entering Flanders at the head of an army, to ſeize the rebellious prince; but renouncing his intentions, he determined rather to deprive him of the ſucceſſion, and to leave the crown to his younger ſon Charles duke of Berri. It is highly probable he would have effected this deſign, if death had not prevented him.

During the latter years of his life, Charles had become diſtruſtful, ſuſpicious, and uneaſy: he feared the dauphin's vindictive ſpirit might puſh him to attempts the moſt atrocious. While he reſided at Meun-ſur-Yeure, in Berri, he received repeated informations, that his own domeſtics had plotted to deſtroy him. The wretched king, terrified at an intimation ſo alarming, and not knowing on whoſe attachment or fidelity to rely, refuſed obſtinately to receive any nouriſhment during ſome days; and when at length, vanquiſhed by the importunity of his attendants, he would have willingly eat, nature was no longer able: he could not ſwallow any ſuſtenance, and ſoon after expired.

The character of Charles is infinitely amiable. He poſſeſſed all thoſe qualities which conciliated affection, and touch the heart. Courteous, gallant, liberal, amorous, and brave; yet ſinking, from natural diſpoſition, and a ſort of yielding incapacity, into an effeminate and enervate indolence, which he could not reſiſt; and again emerging into the exertion of all the virtues which diſtinguiſh a hero and a prince. Born to experience every viciſſitude of fortune, and, after triumphing over his political enemies, to find domeſtic ones more cruel and unfeeling, he may be accounted a happy monarch, but a miſerable individual.

Though attached too cloſely to his favourites, and ſometimes led by that attachment into errors, he yet never uſed his authority with rigour,

gour, or oppreſſed his people by heavy impoſitions: and his reign, diſtinguiſhed by the entire extirpation of the Engliſh from the dominions of France, is one of thoſe on which their hiſtorians peculiarly delight to dwell. The kingdom, long torn by every ſpecies of foreign and internal commotion, began to recover; and no longer nouriſhing in its vitals a hoſtile and powerful enemy, grew more confirmed in its police, more important in the European ſcale. By a ſimilar progreſſion, the royal power, hitherto ſhackled and limited from the feudal regulations, acquiring gradually ſtrength, became wider in its influence, and more reſiſtleſs in its ſupremacy. In the ſubſequent reign, it was carried into a deſpotiſm the moſt extenſive and uncontrouled.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

Louis the eleventh's character, and commencement of his reign.—Interview with Henry King of Caſtile.—Louis's violence and oppreſſions.—League of the public good.—Acceſſion and character of Charles laſt duke of Burgundy.—Interview of Peronne.—King's impriſonment and terrors.—Death of Charles duke of Berri.—Interview with Edward the fourth at Pecquigni.—Louis's inſidious policy.—The duke of Burgundy's attempts on Switzerland.—Battle of Nancy, and death.—Burgundy re-united to France.—Concluſion of Louis's reign.—Cruelties.—Firſt ſtroke of an apoplexy.—His pilgrimage.—His encreaſing ſeverity.—Minute circumſtances of his illneſs.—Death.—Character.—Miſtreſſes.

WE are about to enter on a reign of a very extraordinary and ſingular nature. A prince odious in his character, deteſtable in his conduct; violating every maxim of honourable or virtuous policy; deviating frequently even from the rules of intereſt; uniformly flagitious, and ſyſtematically bad—yet attaining by the mazes of an inſidious and eccentric ſubtlety, to the completion of almoſt all his views, and acquiring a prerogative and authority unknown to his predeceſſors. Such is Louis the eleventh!

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—The detail of his actions as a king, will prove the juſtice of the portrait.

So univerſally abhorred had the rebellion and ingratitude of Louis, while dauphin, rendered him, that a conſiderable party was already formed in the court of Charles the ſeventh, for the young duke of Berri: but the count du Maine having ſent intelligence to Louis of his father's death, he loſt not a moment in profiting of it; and the duke of Burgundy, long his protector, and now become his vaſſal, mounting on horſeback, attended him, together with his ſon the count de Charolois, to Rheims, where he cauſed himſelf to be immediately crowned.

The opening of his reign was marked with all thoſe changes and alterations cuſtomary on the acceſſion of princes; and peculiarly to be expected on that of one who had lived in open diſcord with the preceding ſovereign. Every maxim of government adopted by Charles, was counteracted by Louis; all his officers or favourites degraded with ignominy, and new ones advanced to power; the duke of Alençon, who had been committed to priſon for treaſonable practices, releaſed, and the count de Dammartin, immured in the Baſtile: the nobility diſpoſſeſſed of their charges, and the people loaded with exactions: the duke of Bretagne invaded, and the duke of Berri defrauded of his appennage.

After a commencement ſo ſtrongly predictive of his future meaſures, he haſtened into Gaſ-

cony, to an interview with Henry the Impotent, king of Caſtile. The two ſovereigns met at Mauleon, on the confines of Navarre, and formed a contraſt not a little remarkable. Henry, vain, magnificent, haughty, and ſumptuous, attended with a ſplendid train. Louis, with no external marks of royalty; mean in his perſon; clad in coarſe cloth, ſhort and unbecoming: a notre dame of lead in his bonnet; and ſlenderly accompanied. After a fruitleſs conference, they both retired, with ſentiments of mutual contempt.

As he became confirmed in the throne, his character unfolded and developed itſelf. The labyrinths of a crooked policy in which he trod, made him ever attentive to the means of contracting and diminiſhing the power of all the great vaſſals of the crown. Among theſe, the duke of Burgundy held the firſt place; the duke of Bretagne the ſecond. With the former he exerted the arts of intrigue; and, by means of a ſecret correſpondence which he kept up in his court, procured the reſtitution of thoſe towns on the Somme, ceded at the treaty of Arras to Philip, and which made him maſter of all Picardy. As this negociation was effected in contradiction to the ſentiments of the count de Charolois, it laid the foundation of that perſonal hatred which he ever bore the king, and which Louis encreaſed by the tenor of all his ſubſequent conduct.

With the latter of theſe princes, as leſs powerful, he ſcarce obſerved any meaſures; the mandates

mandates he ſent him, were of the moſt deſpotic and imperious nature; they forbad him to levy any taxes in his duchy, to ſtrike money, or to term himſelf "duke, by the grace of God." It was, to deprive him at once of all independence, or ſovereignty. Francis the ſecond, a weak but generous prince, was at this time duke of Bretagne. Unable to refuſe compliance with theſe haughty orders, he affected to ſubmit to them; while he privately ſet on foot the means to reſtrain a power, which threatened the ſubverſion or annihilation of every other.

Deſirous to ſtrengthen his proceedings by the ſhadow of a national concurrence, the king meanwhile aſſembled the ſtates, and laid before them his pretended reaſons for ſo unparalleled an act of deſpotiſm. Charles, duke of Orleans, firſt prince of the blood, reſpectable from his age, and beloved for his virtues, preſumed to oppoſe and diſapprove his meaſures; but the unfeeling Louis reproached and reprimanded him in expreſſions ſo cutting and ſevere, that the duke, unable to ſurvive this humiliating treatment, died of grief and mortification only two days after. His death did not obliterate his conduct, or ſoften the heart of his obdurate ſovereign: it was perpetuated in a breaſt which never forgave, and knew no emotions of tenderneſs, reſpected no ties of conſanguinity. The family of Orleans had pretenſions of the juſteſt kind on the duchy of Milan, in right of

Valentina, mother of the deceaſed duke; but Louis, ſo far from eſpouſing theſe claims, allied himſelf with Franciſco Sforza, who had uſurped the dominions on the extinction of the houſe of Viſcomti, and ſecured him in poſſeſſion of them, from motives of hatred to the princes of his own blood.

Theſe reiterated and encreaſing acts of violence and oppreſſion, produced in the end a general convulſion. The firſt nobles, rouſed by paſt indignities, and apprehenſive of future ones more intolerable, took up arms againſt the author of them. The count de Dunois, grown grey under the late king, and univerſally revered, appeared at the head of his vaſſals: the count de St. Pol, and the duke of Nemours, were joined by Dammartin, eſcaped from his impriſonment. The duke of Bretagne prepared to enter France with an army; the duke of Berri fled to him for an aſylum; and the count de Charolois, at the head of a conſiderable body of forces, directed his march ſtraight to the capital.

In this alarming concurrence of circumſtances, the genius of Louis, active, penetrating, and peculiarly calculated to extricate him from difficulties, eminently appeared. On the firſt news of the conſpiracy he fell immediately on the weakeſt leaders, and reduced them to implore his clemency. The apprehenſion that his enemies might take poſſeſſion of Paris, obliged him to grant it; and he was on his way to ſecure that city, when the Burgundian army meeting

him

him at Montlhery, an action unavoidably enſued. It was indeciſive; but the king, anxious for the preſervation of the metropolis, and diſtruſtful of the attachment of its citizens, firſt diſlodged, and re-entered Paris. Compelled by the neceſſity of his affairs, he bent with all the pliability of addreſs, adopted manners the moſt engaging and popular, courted the wives of the mechanics, promiſed a repeal of every onerous or extraordinary impoſt, and extended ſeveral acts of grace to retain them in allegiance.

Meanwhile the Breton army having joined the count de Charolois, formed a prodigious aſſemblage of troops: they aſſumed the title of the League for the public good; and directing their courſe towards the capital, encamped in the ſurrounding villages. After vainly attempting to gain poſſeſſion of it by blockade, or famine, or intrigue, and no inſurrection taking place, terms of accommodation were propoſed. Louis, who knew that this powerful combination could only be ſucceſsfully reduced by effecting its diſunion, complied with all their demands; reſolved only to adhere to them, while compelled to it by force. He yielded therefore, though with infinite reluctance, the duchy of Normandy to Charles his brother; inveſted the count de St. Pol with the ſword of conſtable; reſtored the towns upon the Somme to the count de Charolois; and replaced the other chiefs of the confederacy in all their lands and offices.

The league thus broken, each member of it returned into his own dominions or caſtles; while the crafty king, only waiting for the favourable moment, held himſelf in readineſs to improve it to the utmoſt.

The inſurrections of the Flemings againſt the houſe of Burgundy, and the diſcontents of the Normans with the adminiſtration of their new duke, who ſuffered himſelf to be governed by weak counſellors, gave Louis that opportunity which he ſo anxiouſly deſired. Vigorous and rapid in his movements when occaſion demanded it, he firſt compelled the duke of Bretagne to abandon his brother; and then depriving the defenceleſs prince of his newly ceded duchy, forced him to fly a miſerable refugee to his ally for ſhelter. The duke of Burgundy, broken with years and infirmities, could extend no protection to his friends in perſon; and his ſon was occupied with the rebellious Liègeois. They endeavoured to rouze the king of England in their quarrel; but Edward the fourth was as yet not ſufficiently confirmed in the throne, to undertake a foreign war; and Louis, triumphant over ſo many enemies, and rendered ſtronger by their oppoſition, grew more tyrannical in his conduct, more oppreſſive in his government.

At this time Philip duke of Burgundy died in a very advanced age. His juſtice, beneficence, and paternal attention to his people, obtained him the ſurname of "the good." Superadded to theſe amiable qualifications, the extent of territory

ritory he poſſeſſed, and the ſplendid munificence of his temper, ranked him among the greateſt princes of his time. The count de Charolois his ſon ſucceeded him. — Of fiery and impetuous manners, bold even to temerity, inflexible in the proſecution of deſigns he had once adopted, aiming at royalty, and exhauſting his revenues in vain attempts to extend his dominions; Charles, over-reached in policy by the king of France, and unequal to the vaſt projects he had conceived, deſtroyed the fabric which his three predeceſſors had erected, and expired the victim of his immoderate ambition.

Though Louis, from the prompt and immediate ſeizure of the occaſion to attack the dukes of Bretagne and Berri, had gained the aſcendency, yet this advantage was only temporary. Charles of Burgundy, his inveterate enemy, was returned victorious from Flanders, and had reinſpired the oppoſition of his two allies, by leading a powerful army to their aſſiſtance.

The king, wary and cautious, truſting no event to fortune which wiſdom or ſubtlety might regulate; and like Philip of Macedon, believing no fortreſs impregnable where a mule laden with ſilver could enter, attacked the duke firſt with gold, and bought a truce at the price of one hundred and twenty thouſand ecus. As this however procured only a ſuſpenſion of hoſtilities, and deſirous of detaching him altogether from his connections, he determined on a perſonal interview: relying on his own powers of perſuaſion,

perſuaſion, and duped by his vanity, Louis named Peronne as the place of their meeting. Willing at the ſame time to give the duke an inconteſtible proof of his perfect confidence in his honour, he came without any guards, and only attended by two or three noblemen of his court. Charles received him with every mark of honorary diſtinction, and lodged him in the town; but ſeveral Burgundian and other foreign perſons of rank arriving, who were his avowed enemies, he began to entertain ſome apprehenſions reſpecting his ſafety, and requeſted the duke to aſſign him apartments in the caſtle, as more ſecure from inſult or injury. By this ſtep, ſtill more imprudent than the firſt, he rendered himſelf abſolutely a priſoner.

Previous to the interview, the king, whoſe grand object was ever to keep the duke of Burgundy employed in domeſtic wars, had ſent agents privately to Liège, to induce them to reſume their arms, by a promiſe of his protection. He did not expect the conſequence of this meſſage to be inſtantaneous; but the Liègeois impetuous and violent, no ſooner received the intimation, than they broke out into open rebellion, maſſacred their governors, and committed a thouſand exceſſes. When Charles received this intelligence, he became furious with reſentment. Perfectly conſcious at whoſe inſtigation it had been commenced, he denounced vengeance againſt the perfidious monarch, ordered the caſtle gates to be cloſed, and even debated

bated whether he ſhould not put him to immediate death.

Louis, naturally timid and irreſolute, in the hands of his mortal enemy whom he had deeply offended, ſurrounded with people who deteſted him, and ſhut up in a chamber at the foot of that very tower where Hebert, count de Vermandois, had formerly cauſed Charles the Simple to be murdered, underwent by anticipation all the horrors of death. The duke kept him three days in this painful ſuſpence; during which time, the king, whoſe ſubtlety forſook him not in ſo dangerous a criſis, found means to engage ſome of his attendants in his intereſts. He was releaſed; but under conditions the moſt ignominious and humiliating. Charles obliged the king to accompany him with three hundred men at arms to the ſiege of Liège, which he took by ſtorm, puniſhed with extreme ſeverity their diſobedience; and then diſmiſſing his ſovereign, whom he had compelled to be a witneſs of all theſe tranſactions, he ſcarce deigned to accompany him half a league on his way, and bid him adieu with a ſort of haughty civility.

There is no incident of Louis's reign, no action in his conduct, ſo apparently contradictory to his character, as his behaviour in this celebrated interview: his ſagacity and his cautious temper bordering on fear, ſeem equally to have forſaken him; and the prince of his age the moſt crafty and political, ſuffered himſelf

ſelf to be over reached by one the leaſt endowed with thoſe qualities.

Among the articles to which the king was reduced to ſubmit while at Peronne, he had promiſed to cede Champagne and Brie to his brother; but as the vicinity of theſe provinces to the Burgundian dominions rendered it highly hazardous, and would have infallibly ſecured the alliance between the two dukes; Louis no ſooner effected his eſcape, than he exerted every engine of dexterity to prevail on his brother to accept Guyenne in exchange. The young prince, weak, and yielding to the affected demonſtrations of kindneſs ſhewn him, complied with the propoſal; but convinced when too late of the error he had committed, and allured by the hopes of a marriage with Mary of Burgundy, Charles's only daughter, and heireſs of his vaſt poſſeſſions, he began to renew his confederacy with him, and to raiſe troops.—His death, marked with every appearance of poiſon, and the evident intereſt which Louis had to perpetrate this crime, ſuperadded to the perſonal hatred he bore the duke, conſpired to render him juſtly and univerſally ſuſpected of the fact *. Guyenne was immediately ſeized, and re-united to the crown.

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* The duke of Berri appears to have been an amiable prince, but of ſlender capacity. Alternately the ſlave of devotion and of love, he was governed by his confeſſor or his miſtreſs, according to his predominant weakneſs. The latter prevailed; and the lady of Montſoreau triumphed over the abbot of St. John d'Angeli.

The news of this deplorable and unexpected event no ſooner reached the duke of Burgundy, than all his indignation and reſentment revived. He entered Picardy with an army, determined to revenge his unhappy ally, to whoſe manes he ſacrificed every inhabitant who fell into his power; but having failed in an attempt on Beauvais, and exhauſting his forces by efforts of a vain and impotent frenzy, rather than of a manly vengeance, he was ſoon under a neceſſity of accepting the truce which Louis offered him. This latter prince, uniform and ſyſtematical in his movements; ever attaining his ends by thoſe means which ſeemed moſt remote from their object, grew every year more deſpotic, and added ſome new acquiſition to the regal prerogative or authority: he ſeized on the territories of the

d'Angeli. Jealous of this pre-eminence, and bent on revenge, the monk cauſed a peach to be poiſoned, which he preſented to the lady. She divided it with a knife, and giving half to her lover, eat the reſt herſelf: the conſequence was immediately fatal, and ſhe expired in great agonies. The duke from the ſtrength of his conſtitution, reſiſted the poiſon, during ſome time; though he loſt his hair and nails which came off, yet he lingered near ſix months, and then died at Bourdeaux. The abbot fled; but being ſeized in Bretagne by order of Francis the ſecond, the reigning duke, he was carried to Nantes; it was intended to bring him to a public trial, in the hope and expectation of his accuſing Louis the eleventh, as his accomplice or abettor—but on the morning appointed to conduct him before the judges, he was found dead in his cell, ſtrangled and lying on the floor. As by this cataſtrophe, a veil was drawn before the whole affair, it was commonly believed that the king had not heſitated to conceal the firſt crime by the perpetration of a ſecond.

count

count d'Armagnac, committed the duke of Alençon to priſon, and retained the duke of Bretagne in his ſubjection.

While Louis thus aggrandized his houſe, the duke of Burgundy, whom a fatal paſſion for extending his dominions had intoxicated, began that train of errors and miſconduct which terminated in his fall. Inſtead of watching with circumſpection the minuteſt actions of his perfidious and powerful neighbour; he engaged in a quarrel with the whole Germanic body, by laying ſiege to Nuiz on the Rhine, under pretexts the moſt inſufficient, and even perſiſted in it to the deſtruction of his whole army, without ſucceſs.

In the mean time, Edward the fourth, having vanquiſhed all the partizans of the houſe of Lancaſter, and eſtabliſhed himſelf on the throne, began to turn his view to the recovery of thoſe poſſeſſions, to which every king of England ſince Edward the third had laid claim. Endowed with martial qualities, ſucceſsful in every war where he had perſonally commanded, and yet in the vigour of his age, he ſeemed capable of renewing the laurels won at Azincourt. Invited by the preſſing and repeated importunities of the duke of Burgundy, he landed at Calais; but his ally, engaged in the ſiege of Nuiz, and pertinaciouſly adhering to his deſign, after detaining him ſome time, appeared unattended and ſingle, inſtead of bringing according to promiſe, a powerful body of troops. Edward however advanced into Picardy,

cardy, in the expectation that the conſtable St. Pol would, as he had promiſed, ſurrender into their hands the town of St. Quintin; but the count, by a double piece of treachery, deceived his allies, and gave Louis time to avert the ſtorm.

The ſubtle king had recourſe to artifice and negociation, his uſual engines; he knew that the deciſion of arms was ever hazardous and uncertain; that of intrigue, more ſure and unfailing. Edward, voluptuous and indolent, lent an eaſy ear to theſe propoſals; an accommodation was ſoon managed, and a peace ſigned, notwithſtanding Charles's oppoſition, at Amiens. The two monarchs in conſequence agreed on an interview at the bridge of Pecquigni, near that city. A grated barrier was erected on the middle, and two boxes raiſed for the purpoſe. Louis, whoſe pliant genius accommodated itſelf to every ſituation of politics, and who thought no ſubmiſſions too mean for the attainment of his views; flattered the Engliſh prince, invited him with all the apparent cordiality of friendſhip, to his capital, and at the ſame time ſecured by preſents the principal nobles in his intereſts.

Edward returned to England; the Burgundian, compelled by neceſſity and weakneſs, accepted a ſuſpenſion of arms; and the conſtable, whoſe perfidy had rendered him obnoxious to every party, was given up by Charles into the king's hands, who after a haſty trial, cauſed him to be condemned for treaſon, and inſtantly beheaded.

Untaught

Untaught by the ill ſucceſs which had attended all his plans of ambition and greatneſs, the duke of Burgundy perſiſted in the purſuit of them. He engaged in a diſpute with the Swiſs cantons, nor would hearken to the humble and repeated inſtances they made to him for peace. Theſe virtuous and hardy people, who had purchaſed their freedom by the boldeſt oppoſition to Auſtrian tyranny, and who cheriſhed amid their lakes and mountains the warmeſt attachment to it, reſiſted his invaſion with determined courage; and after having defeated him in two engagements, obliged him to renounce his enterprize with ignominy.

Still bent on conqueſts, and driven almoſt to madneſs by his repeated diſgraces, he laid ſiege to Nancy in Lorrain, though with only three thouſand men, and amid the rigours of winter. René duke of Lorrain attacked him with ſuperior forces. At the firſt ſhock, the count de Campobaſſo, a Neapolitan, on whom he had conferred unnumbered favours, baſely withdrew with four hundred horſe which he commanded; and at the ſame time, by an act of unparalleled ingratitude and villainy, left twelve or fifteen men about his perſon, with ſtrict command to aſſaſſinate him in his flight. They executed the deteſtable commiſſion but too faithfully; and the unhappy duke was found dead, pierced with three wounds.—It is not certain what motive influenced Campobaſſo to perpetrate ſo foul a crime on his benefactor. It is ſaid, that Charles had once ſtruck him,

him, and that revenge ſtimulated him to it; but hiſtory has not clearly elucidated this point *.

Thus

* Campobaſſo had been baniſhed from Naples, on account of his adherence to the Angevine faction in that kingdom. From whatever ſource his hatred to the duke of Burgundy originated, he carried it to the moſt flagitious pitch, ſince he certainly offered Louis the eleventh, repeatedly, to deliver up to him his maſter alive or dead. The king, how little ſcrupulous ſoever to circumvent his enemies, abhorred ſo black a treachery, and even ſent Charles intimation of the deſign—but the infamous opinion which he entertained of the perſon from whom this information came, made him neglect and deſpiſe it. "If," ſaid he "it were "true, the king would never have imparted to me ſo important "a ſecret." He even redoubled his marks of confidence and attachment to the perfidious Neapolitan.

His body, though carefully ſought for, could not be diſcovered, after the action, till Campobaſſo ſent an Italian page, who pointed out the ſpot where he fell, which was at ſome diſtance from the ſcene of battle. The duke was entirely naked, lying on his belly, and his face cloſe to a piece of ice of the marſh where he had expired. He was wounded in three places: one by a halberd, which had ſplit his jaw; the two others were made by a pike; the firſt having pierced both his thighs from ſide to ſide, and the laſt entered a little higher. The duke of Lorraine cauſed him to be tranſported to Nancy, and laid on a bed of ſtate, in an apartment hung with black velvet. He afterwards paid him the cuſtomary funeral honours, which were of a moſt ſingular nature.—René wore on that occaſion a golden beard reaching to his middle. Previous to his ſcattering holy water on the corpſe, he advanced up to the deceaſed prince, and taking him by the hand, addreſſed him in theſe words— "God reſt thy ſoul; thou haſt given us much "trouble and grief!"

Charles's errors and vices ſeem to have been more pernicious to himſelf, than injurious to others. He poſſeſſed many ſublime and ſhining qualities; among which his undaunted intrepidity, liberality, application, and magnificence were peculiarly eminent. He was of a middle ſtature, and vigorous frame of body, capable of great fatigue. The lineaments of

his

Thus fell the laſt male of the great houſe of Burgundy. Mary, his only daughter, who had not yet attained her twentieth year, was unable to aſſert her title to the ample poſſeſſions which devolved to her. The imprudence and misfortunes of her father had left the ſtate exhauſted and impotent; the treaſury empty; a council diſmayed and feeble; troops almoſt exterminated.—In this diſtreſſed ſituation, ſhe implored the protection of Louis; ſhe ſubmitted herſelf and her dominions to his pleaſure; ſhe even preſſingly requeſted, that by a marriage with a prince of France, her territories might be re-united to the crown in all their branches. —The conduct of the king to the young princeſs, on this occaſion, was equally deſtitute of magnanimity, as of true policy. To the for-

his countenance were harſh and unpleaſing; his phyſiognomy appearing to indicate the fierceneſs of his natural diſpoſition. — Theſe circumſtances of the duke's character and death are chiefly borrowed from Cominés.

The "Chronique ſcandaleuſe," written by John de Troyes, agrees with the laſt mentioned hiſtorian, in almoſt every particular, and adds ſome others not leſs curious.——"Charles's "body" ſays he, "was diſtinguiſhed from the others that "lay near it in the ſame ſtate of nakedneſs, by ſix marks, "which infallibly aſcertained his identity. The firſt was, the "want of his upper teeth, which had been beaten out by a "fall; the ſecond was, a ſcar on his throat, occaſioned by a "wound he received at the battle of Montlhery; the third, "his great nails, which he always wore longer than any of "his courtiers; fourthly, another ſcar on his left ſhoulder; "the fifth was, a fiſtula on his right groin; and laſtly, a "nail of his foot that grew into his little toe.——His phyſi-"cian, chaplain, and gentlemen of his bed-chamber recog-"nized their maſter by theſe marks."

mer

mer ſentiment he was ever a ſtranger; but nothing, except his unrelenting deteſtation of the Burgundian race, and that eccentric, peculiar path in which he delighted to tread, could have induced him to prefer the hoſtile ſeizure of a part of her dominions, to the tranquil and undiſputed poſſeſſion of the whole. Such was however the alternative he choſe! His army immediately rendered themſelves maſters of Burgundy, almoſt without oppoſition.

The unprotected ducheſs, whoſe condition, ſo juſtly excitive of compaſſion, could not ſoften the malignant heart of Louis, was neceſſitated, after a number of delays and irreſolutions, to accept the hand of Maximilian, ſon to the emperor Frederic; who was by no means capable of recovering her diſmembered territories from ſo powerful an antagoniſt. The king of England was bound by every principle of generoſity and wiſdom, to aſſiſt and ſupport her declining fortunes; but Louis, ſubtle and provident, had precluded this channel of ſuccour, by a promiſe of the dauphin to Edward's eldeſt daughter, though without any intention of fulfilling it: and after ſome feeble and ineffectual efforts on the part of Maximilian, all Burgundy and Artois remained to France.

As Louis advanced in years, the vices of his nature growing inveterate, obtained the fulleſt command over him. The deſpotiſm which he had eſtabliſhed, leaving no barrier to his authority, unveiled and gave full ſcope to that implacable

cable cruelty which characteriſed him through every ſtage of life. He had preſerved an unceaſing deſire of vengeance againſt the duke of Nemours ever ſince the war of the Public Good; and was now determined to gratify it. That unfortunate nobleman, dreading his ſovereign's reſentment, had retired to the fortreſs of Carlat, among the mountains of Auvergne. Louis ſent the Seigneur de Beaujeu, to whom he had married his daughter Anne, with orders to inveſt him in it; but the inacceſſible ſituation of the caſtle rendering it very difficult to gain poſſeſſion by force, the duke received the moſt ſolemn aſſurances of ſafety, if he would ſurrender. Repoſing on the honour of his enemy, he complied: but the king, who ſported with all the ties of virtue and ſociety, cauſed him, in violation of his compact, to be carried to the Baſtile; he then compelled, though with difficulty, the reluctant judges to condemn him, and ordered him to be beheaded. Nor did his revenge ſtop there; but by a refinement in cruelty unexampled, he commanded the two ſons of the duke, yet in early childhood, and of conſequence incapable of any participation in treaſon, to be placed directly under the ſcaffold, and covered with the blood of their miſerable father, which deſcended on their heads.

Theſe are recitals at which humanity ſhudders; but what ſhall we ſay to the univerſal teſtimony of the French hiſtorians, and even of Cominés himſelf; who aſſure, that during his

his reign, he put to death more than four thouſand perſons by various ſpecies of torture, without even the forms of trial; and that he uſually was preſent himſelf at their executions, in which ſpectacle he taſted a barbarous ſatisfaction? Scarce do the frantic exceſſes of Caligula ſurpaſs thoſe of Loüis in atrocity or number. Happily we draw towards the termination of this tragic drama.

While every public and private proſperity ſeemed to attend on the king, and no foreign or internal commotion diſturbed his ſchemes, death prepared to arreſt him He was at a village near Chinon in Touraine, when a ſtroke of an apoplexy ſeized him: he lay two days motionleſs and ſpeechleſs; at the end of which time, his voice and intellects returned, but not the health he had previouſly enjoyed. Rendered more diſtruſtful by this ſymptom of approaching diſſolution, and jealous leſt from any perſonal incapacity, attempts ſhould be made to infringe his authority; he redoubled his vigilance and timid circumſpection. As the duke of Bourbon appeared to be the only prince who poſſeſſed the qualities requiſite for ſuch a pretenſion, he ſeized, without accuſal or pretext, on all his lands; and even endeavoured to invent crimes by which he might ultimately ruin and put him to death.

Amid theſe occupations, a ſecond apoplectic ſeizure again warned him of his end. To avert the impending calamity, he made a pilgrimage

to

to St. Claude in Franche Comté: his devotion and his cruelty both increaſed; he was attended in this mock pilgrimage by ſix thouſand men at arms, and left bloody traces of his route in almoſt every place through which he paſſed.

So far from relaxing his accuſtomed ſeverity, as he approached the verge of life, his temper hardened into a ſterner barbarity. His wife, whoſe patient and enduring attachment, whoſe mild and ſilent virtues, merited a better treatment, he baniſhed into Savoy, after having kept her during many years ſhut up in ſome one of the royal caſtles; where he rarely viſited her, and in which ſhe reſided as a ſimple individual, without ſtate, and almoſt without attendants. By his laſt will, he expreſly precluded her from any ſhare in the government, and endeavoured to inſpire his ſon with ſentiments of diſtruſt and averſion to his mother.

The young dauphin he held as a ſort of priſoner in the caſtle of Amboiſe, where he ſaw none except valets and perſons of the meaneſt condition. No education, no inſtructions were infuſed into his early mind, from a dread, that ſuch information might awaken his dormant qualities, and induce him to make attempts againſt the government.

His treatment of Louis duke of Orleans, firſt prince of the blood, was ſimilar. He carried him with him a captive wherever he moved; and, by one of thoſe abominable ſtrokes of unnatural policy which diſcriminate Louis the eleventh

eleventh from any other monarch, he obliged him to marry the princeſs Jane, his youngeſt daughter; though ſhe was deformed in a great degree, and had not even received a decent education. She was beſides only twelve years of age, and the duke only fourteen. This union of force and compulſion was afterwards broken by Louis, when he aſcended the throne*.

Beſides theſe inſtances of domeſtic tyranny, the people groaned under his oppreſſions. Numbers of the nobility were carried about as wild beaſts, confined in iron cages; a horrid invention, unknown before this reign, and the frequency of which increaſed with the progreſs of his diſorder. A third ſtroke, of a ſimilar na-

* There are ſome circumſtances ſo curious and extraordinary, relative to this marriage, that I cannot diſpenſe with mentioning them. It ſeems that the king was fully convinced his daughter could bear no children, ſince, in a letter of his to the count de Dammartin ſtill extant, he ſays, ſpeaking of the future bride and her huſband,——"Qu'ils n'auroient pas beaucoup d'embarras à nourrir les enfans qui naitroient de leur union; mais cependant, elle aura lieu, quelque choſe qu'on en puiſſe dire."

Louis the twelfth pretended that he never conſummated the nuptials; but this, on many accounts, is highly improbable, though admitted by pope Alexander the ſixth, at the ſubſequent diſſolution of them. St. Gelais de Montlieu, in his hiſtory, expreſly aſſerts the contrary: theſe are his words,—— "C'eſt grand merveille de ce qu'on faiſoit au duc d'Orleans, et les menaces qu'on lui faiſoit s'il ne s'acquittoit de coucher avec la ditte dame Jehanne. On ne le menaçoit de rien moins que de la vie; et j'aurois grand honte de reciter la façon comme on uſoient ceux qui étoient autour, tant hommes que femmes."——All this plainly beſpeaks the conſummation of their marriage.

ture with the two former, ſeemed to promiſe his kingdom a termination of its evils; yet he ſtill ſurvived for new ſeverities.

The death of Charles of Anjou at this juncture added Provence to the crown; and that of Mary of Burgundy, who periſhed by a fall from her horſe in hunting, during her pregnancy*, opened the way to a pacification between Louis and Maximilian, by the affiance of his infant daughter Margaret with the dauphin Charles.

Edward the fourth expired much about the ſame time; and England by that event, was once more plunged into all thoſe convulſions and civil broils, from which ſhe had hardly begun to recover.

The concluding ſcenes of Louis's life hold up one of the moſt awful pictures which can be preſented to the imagination. That of Pygmalion, though heightened by the colours of Fenelon's rich and deſcriptive pen, is not more tremendous, or more affecting. He exhauſted every power of medicine, or devotion, or ar-

* Cominés ſays, ſhe died of a fever conſequent to, and occaſioned by her accident. The cotemporary authors aſſert, that her exquiſite modeſty and delicacy alone made the fall fatal; ſince ſhe preferred death to the permitting a ſurgeon to ſet her thigh, which was broke.

Her ſubjects deeply regretted her loſs.—She had rendered herſelf univerſally beloved for her affability, liberality, and faithful attachment to her huſband.—Lord Rivers, brother to Elizabeth Woodville, Edward-the fourth's queen, had been among the number of her ſuitors; but was refuſed, as of a rank too much beneath the princeſs.

tifice,

tifice, to prolong a miſerable and hateful exiſtence. To inſpire him with gaiety, the moſt beautiful country girls were brought to dance round his houſe, and bands of men who played on lutes accompanied them. To intercede with Heaven in his behalf, proceſſions were ordered throughout the whole kingdom for his recovery; and public prayers offered, to avert the Bize, a cold, piercing wind which incommoded him extremely. A vaſt collection of relics was brought, as if to ſecure him by their influence from the ſtroke of death: while his phyſician treated him with inſult, and extorted from him vaſt ſums of money; which the king dared not to refuſe him in thoſe circumſtances. It is even pretended, that a bath of infant's blood was prepared for him, in the expectation that it would ſoften the acrimony of his ſcorbutic humours; but to this we lend a very ſlender faith.

After changing his place of reſidence many times, he ſat down at the caſtle of Pleſſiz-les-Tours. The walls were covered with iron ſpikes; a guard of croſs-bow men watched night and day, as if to ſecure him from invaſion. He heard enemies in the paſſing wind: every thing terrified and alarmed his guilty mind. Only one wicket admitted into the caſtle; and ſcarce any one approached his perſon, except the lady of Beaujeu his daughter, and her huſband. During theſe diſmal circumſtances, he yet tried to perſuade himſelf and

others that he might live. In this flattering deluſion, he ſent to ſeek a Calabrian hermit, eminent for ſanctity, named Franciſco de Paolo. He threw himſelf on his knees before this monk; beſought with humble ſupplications his intereſt with the Deity for the prolongation of his life; built him two convents, as proofs of his zeal; and knew no bounds to his adulation and reſpect for the ſuppoſed miniſter of Heaven.

Finding however the inevitable hour of fate advance, and unable longer to turn his eyes from the ſurvey of it; he ſent for Charles, his ſon, from Amboiſe, and gave him ſome ſalutary advice, exactly oppoſite to the uniform tenor of all his own conduct — to cheriſh the princes of the blood; to govern by the advice of his nobles; not to controvert the eſtabliſhed laws; and to diminiſh the exorbitant impoſts with which he had burthened his ſubjects. This was the concluding act of his life: he expired ſome days after.

Thoſe who are converſant in the great works of antiquity, will be ſtrikingly reminded, on the peruſal of this ſtory, of the deſcription of Tiberius's exit, as related by Tacitus. It ſeems marked with all the ſame ſtrokes of character.—— "Jam Tiberium corpus, jam vi-
"res, nondum diſſimulatio deſerebat. Idem
"animi rigor, ſermone ac vultu intentus, quæ-
"ſita interdum comitate, quamvis manifeſtam
"defectionem tegebat; mutatiſque ſæpius
"locis,

" locis, tandem apud promontorium Miſeni " conſedit."

After ſo minute and diffuſe a narration of Louis the eleventh's conduct and death, it will be needleſs to draw the character of the king with equal accuracy. The principal ſtrokes of it cannot be miſtaken. His virtues, if he can be ſaid to have poſſeſſed any, were thoſe of policy and artifice: his vices, of diſpoſition and the heart. Even his underſtanding, though clear, ſagacious, and diſcerning, was frequently ſo fine and ſubtle, that it miſled him by its own cunning, and overſhot his purpoſes. France however continued to riſe in the ſcale of empire. Charles the ſeventh laid the foundation of this aggrandiſement, by his expulſion of the Engliſh. Louis added Burgundy, Artois, and Provence to the crown. Only Bretagne remained, of the great fiefs, unannexed.

The malignant and unamiable character of Louis did not prevent him from ſome gallantries. Hiſtory has preſerved the names of ſeveral ſucceſſive miſtreſſes to whom he was attached. Margaret de Saſſenage is the moſt known and celebrated: ſhe died before his acceſſion to the crown: but we never find that any of them influenced the king, or aſſumed the leaſt command over affairs of ſtate. By his firſt wife, the princeſs Margaret of Scotland, he had no iſſue; nor does it appear that he even conſummated the marriage, or cohabited with her, on

account of ſome ſecret defect in her perſon *. His queen, Charlotte of Savoy, an amiable woman, only ſurvived him three months.

I have permitted myſelf to run into a greater prolixity on this reign, than I generally intend —poſſibly greater than was requiſite. I mean to intereſt, rather than inſtruct; and this end can only be attained by an enumeration of thoſe ſeemingly trifling circumſtances; which yet often diſplay the picture of human nature with more fidelity, than the greater actions of the monarch, obſcured by the veil of policy.

* She was daughter to James the firſt, and only eleven years old when married to Louis, then dauphin, at Tours. What the peculiar object of her huſband's diſguſt and averſion was, ſeems covered up very myſteriouſly, and is hard to aſcertain. Moſt of the cotemporary authors aſſert, that her breath was very diſagreeable, and that from that cauſe aroſe his eſtrangement to her. Cominés only ſays, Louis never loved her; without aſſigning the reaſon.—She was an accompliſhed princeſs in other reſpects, and protected letters. A ſingular anecdote is related of her, ſtrongly corroborating this.

Paſſing accidentally through an apartment where Alain Chartier, the moſt brilliant genius but the ugliеſt man of his age, lay aſleep, ſhe advanced up to him and kiſſed him—Her ladies reproaching her by their looks for this ſeeming violation of female modeſty; "It was not the man," ſaid ſhe, "whom I "kiſſed, but the mouth from whence have proceeded ſo many "elevated ſentiments."

She died at Chalons-ſur-Marne, about five years after her marriage, without iſſue; and, as the French authors inform us, of grief for the calumnious imputations affixed on her honour.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Acceſſion of Charles the eighth.—Character of the regent, Anne, Lady of Beaujeu.—Her adminiſtration.—Attempts on the duchy of Bretagne.—The duke of Orleans's intrigues and flight.—His impriſonment.—Marriage of Anne of Bretagne to the king.—The duchy united to the crown.—Termination of the regency.—Charles's opening character.—He is inflamed with ſchemes of conqueſt.—Attack on the kingdom of Naples.—Romantic expedition.—His march—Uninterrupted train of victory—Coronation—Return.—Battle of Fornoua.—Charles abandons himſelf to pleaſures.—Naples loſt.—New plans of invaſion.—Renounced.—The king's change, and ſudden death.—Circumſtances of it.—Character.

THE age of Charles the eighth, at his acceſſion to the crown, was of that critical nature, which rendered it difficult to provide for the regulation of the ſtate. He might be reputed a major without any conſiderable violence to the forms of the monarchy, ſince he had nearly completed his fourteenth year;—but the meanneſs of his education, the confinement to which he had always been ſubjected, and his feeble conſtitution, delicate and ſickly, ſeemed to demand ſome abler and more experienced conductor. The late king, whoſe views ever piercing and active foreſaw this neceſſity, had

not failed to apply to it a remedy. In his expiring moments he nominated Anne, his eldeſt daughter, to the firſt charge of the government, though with the title, not of regent, but of governeſs.

The princeſs had received from nature all the qualities requiſite for this high office. A genius equal to her father's: more uniformity of conduct, and greater magnanimity of mind. Her judgment was ſound, without any mixture of that perfidious duplicity which debaſed the underſtanding of Louis. Though vindictive, not cruel; though tenacious of her dignity, not violent or imperious. Led by no inferior paſſions, ſhe felt her capacities for adminiſtration, and ſacrificed ſovereignly to this purſuit. Miſtreſs of eloquence, and addreſs the moſt refined, ſhe knew how to poſſeſs, and to retain the authority delegated to her.—Such are the bold and vivid colours under which the cotemporary writers have tranſmitted to us her character; and we find them fully expanded and diſplayed during the ſhort but vigorous period, when ſhe poſſeſſed the ſupreme command of affairs.

But though talents ſo various and exalted appeared to juſtify the confidence repoſed in her by Louis the eleventh, equity and uniform preſcription ſeemed to call Louis duke of Orleans to the helm of ſtate. His rank, as firſt prince of the blood, and even preſumptive heir to the crown, rendered his claim incontrovertible; if his unripe age, which exceeded not twenty years,

years, did not diminiſh the force of this plea. Anne knew how to avail herſelf of the defect; and, by an exertion of that dexterity and management which ſhe ſo eminently poſſeſſed, ſecured to herſelf, notwithſtanding the duke's oppoſition, the poſt with which ſhe had been inveſted.

Her firſt acts were of the moſt ingratiating and popular nature. Several creatures, rather than miniſters, of the late king, who had abuſed their favour, by the commiſſion of crimes the moſt enormous, ſhe ſurrendered up to public puniſhment. She revoked the donations which his ſuperſtition and terrors of approaching death had induced him to make to ſeveral convents and monaſtic orders; and conciliated univerſal favour by a mild and equal government. Theſe were however only the inferior operations of the cabinet. Anne, more daring and intrepid than her father, ſaw that the favourable moment was at hand, to reunite Bretagne to the crown of France; nor was deterred from the proſecution of her plan, by the obſtacles which environed it.

Francis the ſecond, ſunk into years and imbecility, had reſigned all power into the hands of Landais; whom an inſinuating and flexible genius, calculated to riſe in courts, had promoted from a mechanical occupation, to the diſpoſal of all his maſter's favour. The Breton nobility, incenſed at ſo unworthy a choice, and irritated by the acts of oppreſſion and violence which he

committed, endeavoured to effect his fall; but the duke, attached to his favourite, ſheltered him from their indignation. Landais, not content with an eſcape, was deſirous of revenge: he menaced his enemies, and even proceeded to the execution of his threats. Neceſſity, united to the deſire of vengeance, forced them to recur for protection to the French miniſtry; and Anne, who only waited for the application, was ready to grant their requeſts of aſſiſtance; when ſome oppoſition which ſhe met with from another quarter, compelled her to turn her views that way, and relinquiſh for an inſtant her project.

Though the ſuperior addreſs and policy of his rival, had obliged the duke of Orleans to acquieſce in her nomination to the firſt poſt of ſtate; yet his diſappointed ambition, in ſo important a ſtruggle, had tended to nouriſh in his boſom an animoſity to her; and his temper, open, and incapable of diſguiſe, made him careleſs or inattentive to its concealment. An incident ſmall in itſelf, but attended with very important conſequences, diſplayed his reſentment, and haſtened the deſtruction of Bretagne.

The court was at Melun. The duke of Orleans and ſome other young noblemen were engaged in a party at tennis, of which the king and his ſiſter were ſpectators: a diſpute ariſing relative to a ſtroke which involved the deciſion of the game, it was referred to them. Madame de Beaujeu heſitated not to pronounce in the duke's

disfavour;

disfavour; who, incenſed at what he apprehended to be an act of flagrant injuſtice, and the reſult of perſonal enmity, was ſo imprudent as to ſay, in a tone of voice by no means inaudible, "Que quiconque l'avoit condamné, ſi c'étoit un "homme il en avoit menti; et ſi c'étoit une fem-"me, que c'étoit une putaine."—This affront, which was of the groſſeſt nature, became unpardonable, when offered to ſo great a perſonage, and in the royal preſence. Anne, miſtreſs of her indignation, reſtrained it ſo far as not to order his immediate arreſt: but ſhe procured from the council an order for that purpoſe, which would have been carried into prompt execution, if the duke had not ſecured himſelf by flight, and aſſembled his partizans and vaſſals for his defence. It was vain. She beſieged him in Beaujency on the Loire; reduced him to terms of abſolute ſubmiſſion; and left him no other authority than that which his rank alone procured.

Louis, though impatient of a yoke ſo galling, was not in a condition to ſhake it off; he even affected an entire acquieſcence: but Anne, jealous and vigilant, having received information that he had entered into ſome negociations with the duke of Bretagne, ſent him an order to repair inſtantly to the king; and on his attempting by a meſſenger to excuſe himſelf under frivolous pretexts, commanded the marechal de Gié to conduct him to her. The duke obeyed, and began his journey; but having gone out next morning, under pretence of trying ſome new falcons,

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he eſcaped a ſecond time, and gained the territories of his ally Francis; who promiſed him his daughter Anne, heireſs to the duchy, in marriage, and entered into the cloſeſt connections with him.

The nobility of Bretagne, who had incenſed their prince by the deſtruction and death of his favourite Landais; apprehenſive of a ſevere chaſtiſement by this acceſſion of ſtrength, implored protection from the lady of Beaujeu. She marched inſtantly a conſiderable army to their reſcue; and after ſeveral inferior advantages, gained the celebrated battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, which decided the conteſt. The duke of Orleans, who fought on foot, and behaved with diſtinguiſhed courage, was taken priſoner. After a ſhort confinement at the caſtle of Luſignan in Poictou, he was conducted to Bourges, where he remained a captive in the great tower above two years.

The ſucceſſes of the French arms obliged Madame de Beaujeu to unmaſk, and declare openly to the Breton nobility, who preſſed her to withdraw her troops, that it was now no longer time. An avowal ſo declaratory of the intention to annex the duchy for ever to the crown, re-united every diſaffected perſon, and reſtored to the duke his rebellious nobility. But Francis, overcome with infirmities, and hurt by a fall from his horſe, expired at this juncture; and left his daughter Anne, ſcarce thirteen years of age, ſurrounded with dangers and enemies.

New factions, and new competitors aroſe for this

this rich alliance.—The Seigneur d'Albret had ſeveral partizans. Maximilian, who had been married to Mary of Burgundy, aſpired to her hand: nor was the duke of Orleans's party, if he had not been detained a priſoner, yet extinct. The young princeſs decided in favour of the archduke; and the marriage was not only ſolemnized by proxy, but attended with a ſingular and curious ceremony; that of the count de Naſſau's introducing his naked leg into the bed of the bride, as repreſenting the perſon of Maximilian. Had he come himſelf in perſon, as every principle of policy dictated, the union would have been rendered indiſſoluble; but the abject, and almoſt incredible parſimony of the emperor Frederic, his father, who refuſed him the inconſiderable ſum of two thouſand ecus, on this great occaſion, deprived him of an acquiſition ſo important.

The French council, fearful leſt the prize ſhould be loſt amid ſo many intrigues and delays, determined to ſend back the princeſs Margaret of Auſtria, to whom the king had been long betrothed, and to demand Anne of Bretagne for Charles the eighth: but though preſſed by the moſt urgent neceſſity, and inveſted by the forces of the ſovereign who courted her alliance, ſhe diſdained to violate the faith ſhe had once pledged; and refuſed, with a noble perſeverance, to accept any huſband except the one ſhe had already choſen. Attacked however on every ſide, and even entreated by the duke of Orleans,

Orleans, whom Charles took from priſon, and ſent to urge his ſuit; and on the other hand, diſguſted by the coldneſs and tardineſs of the archduke, who did not manifeſt the anxiety or impatience which ſuch a match might juſtly excite; the young ducheſs yielded at length, and the nuptials were celebrated at Langeais in Tourain. Maximilian exclaimed loudly againſt this double infringement of the moſt ſolemn and binding inſtitutions; but the evil was irremediable, and the laſt great fief ſwallowed up in the dominions of France.

Henry the ſeventh of England, who had acted from motives of avarice, a part ſimilar to that which Edward the fourth had taken in the affairs of Mary of Burgundy, rather affected to make, than really made, an effort for the preſervation of the duchy. He landed at Calais; but was ſoon induced to retire into his own dominions, by an argument irreſiſtible with a prince of his character—I mean gold.

With the important acquiſition of Bretagne, may be ſaid to have terminated the authority of Anne de Beaujeu. Her credit and influence had begun previouſly to diminiſh. The young king, who approached to years of manhood, manifeſted too great an impatience of controul, to be longer held in tutelage; and his character expanding with his age, rendered him known to his people. No reſemblance of his father appeared in Charles. Lively and brilliant, but of feeble judgment, he poſſeſſed a temper

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the moſt amiable and gentle; a heart which even power could not corrupt to the commiſſion of a crime. Fond of pleaſure, though eaſily inflamed with the love of glory, he ſacrificed alternately to both; and reſembled his grandfather, Charles the ſeventh, in the rapid tranſitions he made from one to the other.

During the interval of tranquillity and repoſe which ſucceeded to the reduction or union of Bretagne; the courtiers, deſirous of ingratiating themſelves with their ſovereign, began firſt to dazzle his imagination with ideas of fame and conqueſt. The pretenſions which, as ſucceſſor to the houſe of Anjou, he had on the kingdom of Naples, formed a plauſible and flattering theme to a youthful mind. Charles poſſeſſed the perſonal courage requiſite for military exploits. Ludovico Sforza, ſurnamed the Moor, brother to the celebrated Franciſco, and uncle to the reigning duke of Milan, Galeazzo, invited and importuned him, from intereſted motives, to come and take poſſeſſion of his right. Upon the firſt report of ſuch an intention, Ferdinand, who reigned in Naples, and who had paſſed his ſeventieth year, ſent an embaſſy to the king, of the moſt ſubmiſſive nature, offering to pay homage, and an annual tribute. Theſe propoſals, which ought to have been accepted, were inſtantly refuſed; and the old king, terrified at the impending invaſion, and unable to avert it, expired ſoon after of grief and terror.

The rage for foreign war having once gained poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion of the young monarch, no arguments or motives of policy could induce him to relinquiſh it. In vain did the lady of Beaujeu oppoſe ſo raſh and ill-concerted an enterprize. She had loſt her former influence, and was no longer heard. With ſuch warmth was this injudicious determination adopted, that even the moſt important and certain acquiſitions were renounced, for a contingent and diſtant crown. Rouſillon and Cerdagne, of which Louis the eleventh had poſſeſſed himſelf during the troubles of Spain, by an unwearied and maſterly policy, were ceded to Ferdinand of Arragon, only to obtain his neutrality in the attack on Naples. None of the abſurd and legendary adventures of chivalry were ever more romantic, or undertaken in greater contradiction to reaſon, than this of Charles. Without money, without any certain or honourable ally, and with a handful of troops courageous and gallant, but unaccuſtomed to the fatigues of long or diſaſtrous campaigns; he undertook to march over the Alps and Appennines, to the extremity of Italy, through the dominions of the Pope and Florence, who had openly declared againſt him.

After a number of delays and procraſtinations, unavoidable at the commencement of ſuch an enterprize, Charles began his march. While he waited at Aſt in Piedmont for his artillery, which was obliged to be dragged over the mountains, he was ſeized with the ſmall-pox; from which he recovered after the moſt imminent danger

danger of his life. At Turin he was neceſſitated to borrow all the rings and jewels of the ducheſs of Savoy, as he did at Caſal thoſe of the marchioneſs of Montſerrat, to ſupply the neceſſary charges of the war. Ludovico Sforza met him at Vigeve; but quitted him in a few days, to take poſſeſſion of the duchy of Milan, which he ſeized on the death of Galeazzo, his nephew, though he had left an infant ſon. If Charles had purſued the dictates of ſound policy, he ſhould himſelf have conquered Milan, which belonged of right to the family of Orleans; but, intoxicated with his Neapolitan ſchemes, he continued his progreſs.

The Florentines, who paſſionately aſpired to freedom, expelled Pietro de Medicis on the king's approach to Tuſcany; and received him in military triumph into the city. Clad in complete armour, mounted on horſeback, his lance couched, and his vizor lowered, he entered Florence as a conqueror. Alexander the ſixth, the reigning pontiff, retired, at this tremendous intelligence, into the caſtle of St. Angelo, after he had commanded the gates of Rome to be thrown open; and Charles, victorious without a blow, took poſſeſſion of the city as by right of conqueſt, and diſpoſed of his troops in the different quarters of it.—The pope ſoon capitulated; and after a treaty ſuch as the neceſſity of his affairs reduced him to conclude, the French army quitted Rome, and reſumed its march.—Meanwhile all was conſternation and affright

affright at Naples. Alfonſo, who had ſucceeded to his father in the throne, yielding to terrors the moſt unmanly, and almoſt inconceivable, reſigned the ſceptre to young Ferdinand his ſon, and fled into a monaſtery at Meſſina in Sicily *.

* If we may credit the hiſtorians, Alfonſo's panic roſe to a degree approaching frenzy. Such were his fears, that though the French army was ſixty leagues diſtant, he apprehended he ſaw them in the ſtreets of Naples, and that the very walls, trees, and ſtones, cried out, "France!" The queen-dowager imploring him only to remain three days, which were wanting to complete a year from his acceſſion to the crown, he refuſed; and even threatened, if he was longer detained againſt his inclination, to precipitate himſelf from the windows of the palace. After having cauſed his ſon Ferdinand to be ſolemnly crowned and inaugurated, he embarked on board a veſſel; carrying with him all ſorts of wines, and ſeeds for his gardens, to both which pleaſures he was immoderately attached. Landing in Sicily, he retired into a convent at Meſſina; and abandoning himſelf to ſuperſtitious and monaſtic auſterities, ſoon contracted by thoſe rigors an excoriation and gravel, which terminated his exiſtence, within a year from Charles the eighth's invaſion.

Cominés deſcribes him as a monſter of impiety and cruelty. Some circumſtances of his oppreſſions and enormities, which he enumerates, are very ſingular. "Both himſelf and his "father Ferdinand," ſays he, "were accuſtomed to deliver "out hogs to the people to fatten, and if any of them died, "they were obliged to repay the king. He indulged himſelf in "the commiſſion of every ſpecies of laſciviouſneſs and barba-"rity: ſold the biſhoprick of Tarento to a Jew for thirteen "thouſand ducats; and gave abbies to his falconers." Cominés, with a ſort of ſacred horror, ſums up the liſt of his iniquities, by declaring, that "he never kept Lent, or even "pretended to do it; and would neither go to confeſſion, "nor receive the ſacrament." Theſe were the moſt flagitious exceſſes of which the human mind could conceive an idea, in the fifteenth century, and ſeemed to eclipſe all his other vices.

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The new king was defeated in a ſort of engagement which he hazarded, and obliged to ſhelter himſelf in the iſle of Iſchia. Naples inſtantly received the victor: the caſtles held out a very ſhort time; and of the whole kingdom, only Brindiſi continued to declare for Ferdinand.

Dazzled with ſo extraordinary a blaze of glory, Charles already meditated the ſack of Conſtantinople, and the ſubverſion of the Ottoman empire. Every thing yielded to his arms; and during ſo long and difficult a march, ſcarce an enemy had appeared to oppoſe his paſſage.—But amid this train of proſperity, he did not advert to the gathering ſtorm. Plunged in the feſtive exceſſes of youth, and fluſhed with conqueſt, no ſteps were taken to ſecure the dominions he had acquired. Banquets and maſquerades ſucceeded each other; and to ſo great a degree of neglect was their miſconduct carried, that troops were not even ſent to receive the places which ſubmitted, and acknowledged the French monarch.

The great powers of Europe, who had looked on, during this rapid ſubverſion of Italy, unmoved, began to awake from their ſupine inaction. A league was made between the pope, the emperor Maximilian, the archduke Philip his ſon, and Ferdinand of Arragon: even the perfidious Sforza, violating the ties of gratitude and honour, acceded to this powerful confederacy.

It became neceſſary for Charles to meditate a retreat.

a retreat. He determined on it, after having previouſly made a triumphal entry into the capital of his new kingdom, clad in the imperial ornaments, a globe in his right hand, and a ſceptre in his left; while a canopy was ſupported over him by the firſt nobles of the country, and all the people cried, "Long live the moſt auguſt emperor!"—This oſtentatious ceremony performed, he quitted Naples; and paſſing again through the papal territories, was ſo imprudent as to loſe twelve or fifteen days at Piſa and Sienna, during which time the great confederate army aſſembled. Louis, duke of Orleans, who ought to have led eight or nine thouſand men to the aſſiſtance of his ſovereign, had engaged in an attempt againſt Ludovico Sforza; and having ſurprized the city of Novarra, was afterwards blocked up in it.

The allied army, though four times more numerous than that of the king, did not venture to attack him among the mountains; but waited for him near the village of Fornoua, nine miles from Placenzia, in an open plain. The courage of the French, animated by the preſence of their prince, was ſuperior to all oppoſition: they gained the day, purſued their march towards France, and reached the city of Aſt with laurels unwithered. — The duke of Orleans continued ſtill ſhut up in Novarra; but Charles at length marching to his relief, extricated him with difficulty from his perilous ſituation,

ſituation, the garriſon having ſuſtained the extremeſt preſſures of famine.

The king had not ſufficient patience to attend the concluſion of a treaty in agitation with Sforza; but, quitting the fatigues of a camp, returned in haſte to Lyons, and once more abandoned himſelf to love and pleaſures. All the haſty and imperfect trophies he had acquired, were ſoon forgotten. A decay in the affairs of Naples, as rapid as the conqueſt of it, rendered abortive all his labours. Ferdinand, more worthy of a diadem than his father or grandfather, returned to the kingdom from which he had been driven. The duke of Montpenſier, left viceroy, after a long and obſtinate attempt to retain poſſeſſion of it, was not only obliged to ſurrender himſelf and his troops priſoners of war, but to capitulate for the complete evacuation of the whole kingdom in a month: and the other commanders refuſing to acknowledge or execute ſo ignominious a treaty, he was ſent, together with the forces which he commanded, to Puzzoli; where a malignant diſtemper deſtroyed both himſelf and the greater part of his unhappy countrymen. Ferdinand, a prince of high expectations, died likewiſe at this critical juncture, before the reduction of his dominions was effected; and his uncle Frederick ſucceeded to the throne *.

Meanwhile

* Ferdinand had only juſt married his own aunt, a beautiful young lady of fourteen years, as Cominés aſſures us. She

Meanwhile new plans of invaſion were ſet on foot in the court of France. The king in compliance with the ſuperſtition of the age, went to St. Denis, to take leave of the holy ſaints and martyrs who repoſe there. The cavalry even paſſed the mountains, and the duchy of Milan was fixed for the ſcene of their firſt attack; when all theſe preparations were ſuddenly ſtopt and laid aſide. It is pretended, that Charles's attachment to one of the queen's maids of honour, occaſioned this extraordinary change; but it is more natural to attribute it to the decay of his health; which, impaired by his exceſſes with women, and originally delicate, began to fail. The duke of Orleans was ſo ſenſible of this apparent decline, which left the ſucceſſion open to him, that he refuſed to take upon him the command of the army deſtined againſt Milan; and every appearance of war was totally relinquiſhed.

The king, whether conſcious that his pleaſures had been productive of very injurious conſequences to him; or whether, from motives of conſcientious ſcruple, renounced all his paſt irregularities; and retiring with the queen, to whom

She was the legitimate daughter of his grandfather Ferdinand, and of conſequence ſiſter to the late king Alfonſo, his father. He expired of a dyſentery and hectic fever, in a little town at the foot of Mount Veſuvius.

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he was exceedingly attached, to the caſtle of Amboiſe, amuſed himſelf with making ſome additions, and erecting new apartments there. Reſigning the ideas of foreign conqueſt, he began to provide for the internal tranquillity of his kingdom; and was occupied in theſe regulations, when a death equally ſudden and ſingular, put an end to his intentions.

He was in an old gallery at Amboiſe, from whence he ſurveyed a game of tennis, which was played in the foſſes of the caſtle. Willing to gratify the queen with the ſame entertainment, he went to her chamber, and taking her by the hand, conducted her to the gallery; but in paſſing through the door which opened into it, he ſtruck his head with violence againſt the top, which was very low: he felt no immediate bad conſequences from the accident, but entered. He even had entirely forgotten the blow, and was engaged in deep converſation with Jacques de Reſli, biſhop of Angers. It turned on religious ſubjects; and the king, who had entirely renounced the debauches in which he had indulged during the firſt years of his marriage, was profeſſing his determined reſolutions to guard ſacredly the fidelity he owed to the queen, when he ſuddenly fell backwards in an apoplectic fit. The courtiers and attendants, terrified at ſo alarming a ſeizure, immediately laid him on a ſmall pallet bed, which by accident was in a corner of the gallery; and on which, notwithſtanding

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ing every effort of medicine, he expired at eleven o'clock the ſame night *.

The inſtant he had breathed his laſt, every one quitted his body; and leaving him in the place where he died, galloped in haſte to Blois, to announce to the duke of Orleans his acceſſion to the crown: while Anne of Bretagne, overcome with grief, and very ſtrongly attached to her huſband, abandoned herſelf to all the diſtraction of ſorrow. It is ſaid ſhe ſat in a corner of her chamber during two days, conſtantly refuſing any nouriſhment, and loſt in deſpair. Perhaps her mortified ambition might, in ſome degree, cauſe ſo immoderate a diſtreſs; as by Charles's death ſhe ſaw herſelf again reduced from queen of France to ducheſs of Bretagne; the two ſons which ſhe had borne him having both lived a very ſhort time.

The ſtrokes of Charles's character are few and ſimple. He was ſurnamed the Affable and

* Philip de Cominés ſays, the king thrice recovered his voice, but quickly loſt it again, as the confeſſor who waited by his majeſty aſſured him. He calls the diſtemper of which Charles expired, a catarrh or apoplexy; and adds, that the indications of his approaching end were apparent to the phyſicians for three or four days before his ſeizure. Yet they entertained hopes that the diſeaſe would only fall on his arms, of which he would probably loſe the uſe. Some of the French hiſtorians have notwithſtanding pretended, though without any ſhadow of proof, or probability, that he was poiſoned with an orange. It is more natural to apprehend that his irregularities enfeebled his conſtitution, and accelerated his end.

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the Courteous; nor is it known that in his whole life, he ever offended or diſguſted any one of his ſervants or ſubjects. His temper was ſweet, and yielding to exceſs; open to generoſity, humanity, and benevolence. — In perſon he was little, and ungraceful; his ſhoulders high, his face plain, and his ſpeech ſlow and interrupted *: his eyes alone were lively and expreſſive. Cominés's deſcription of him is wondrouſly forcible, though laconic.—"Petit homme de corps, et "peu entendu; mais ſi bon, qu'il n'eſt point "poſſible de voir meilleure créature."—There is a certain unadorned naiveté in the picture, which charms and affects.

Though Charles's paſſion for women was exceſſive, and is even ſuppoſed to have conduced to haſten his death; yet we do not find any particular miſtreſs who appears to have attached him long, or obtained any extraordinary aſcendency over him. His capacity was limited, and

* Brantome takes ſome pains to contradict this idea of Charles the eighth, and even produces the teſtimony of his grandmother, the ſenechale of Poictou, who had been a lady of honour under the ducheſs of Bourbon, (Anne de Beaujeu,) and conſequently knew the king's perſon perfectly. She deſcribed him as having a handſome and engaging face, and though low and ſlender in his perſon, yet well made and agreeable.

If the effigy in bronze at St. Denis, where he is in a kneeling attitude, may be ſuppoſed to reſemble the king, it confirms Brantome's aſſertion; who accuſes Guicciardini of malignancy, in belying and depreciating his perſon, in revenge for the calamities he had introduced into Italy. Francis the firſt cheriſhed a peculiar veneration for, and affection to the memory of Charles the eighth.

rendered more ſo by the mean and confined education which he received in the caſtle of Amboiſe during his father's life; but the virtues of his heart, his obſervance of juſtice, and unbounded benignity of diſpoſition, rendered him the moſt amiable of princes. Two of his domeſtics are ſaid to have died of grief for the loſs of their beloved maſter. He had not completed his twenty-eighth year, when death deprived his people of ſo good a king.

In him ended the direct race of Valois; Louis duke of Orleans, who aſcended the throne, being of a collateral branch, and grandſon to the duke of Orleans, brother to Charles the ſixth, was aſſaſſinated in the rue Barbette at Paris.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Louis the twelfth's acceſſion and character.—His divorce, and marriage with Anne of Bretagne.—Conqueſt of Milan, and impriſonment of Ludovico Sforza.—Recovery of Naples, and diviſion of it with Ferdinand of Arragon.—Perfidy of that prince.—Gonſalvo de Cordova drives out the French.—Magnanimity of Louis.—His dangerous illneſs.—Death of Iſabella of Caſtile.—Julius the ſecond's acceſſion to the papacy.—Character.—League of Cambray.—Death of the Cardinal of Amboiſe.—Julius's ambition and ſucceſſes.—Gaſton de Foix appears.—His victories.—Battle of Ravenna.—Death.—Circumſtances.—French driven out of Italy.—Julius dies.—Leo the tenth accedes to the pontificate. Illneſs and death of Anne of Bretagne.—Her character.—The king's grief.—Marriage of Francis count d'Angouleſme to the princeſs Claude.—State of the court.—Louis's marriage.—Illneſs.—Death.—Character.

LOUIS the twelfth had attained his thirty-ſixth year, at the time when he acceded to the crown of France. His judgment, naturally clear and diſcerning, was ripened by experience; and his heart full of every gentle and beneficent ſentiment, was rendered ſupremely capable of feeling the calamities of others, by thoſe which he had undergone himſelf. Un-

der Louis the eleventh he had been treated with cruel and unmerited ſeverity, compelled to a marriage the moſt odious, and denied all the privileges of his rank. Under the ſucceeding regency, fortune perſecuted him even with greater rigour; and the error he committed in appearing in arms againſt his ſovereign at the battle of St. Aubin du Cormier, was fully expiated by a long and rigorous impriſonment, which ſucceeded. The forgiving and clement temper of Charles the eighth had releaſed him from this captivity, but he was notwithſtanding ever regarded with a ſort of jealous attention; and was in diſgrace with the late king at the time of his deceaſe, on account of an unintended affront which Anne of Bretagne reſented highly *.

The firſt acts of his adminiſtration were conſiſtent with his character, and unveiled fully that virtuous integrity, and magnanimous ſu-

* The nature of this undeſigned injury was very extraordinary. The young dauphin Charles was dead; and the phyſicians finding that the king's mind was much affected by ſo melancholy an event, adviſed ſome recreation to divert his grief, which might otherwiſe prey on his feeble conſtitution; The duke of Orleans, in this deſign, appeared at a maſquerade in the caſtle of Amboiſe; and exerted himſelf to an unuſual degree, in a dance, with a lady, which he carried to a pitch of gay extravagance. It produced the very oppoſite effect to that which he expected; for the queen interpreting all theſe marks of levity and mirth to his pleaſure at the dauphin's death, which rendered him again preſumptive ſucceſſor, was exceedingly offended, and obliged him to leave the court, and retire to the caſtle of Blois.

periority

periority to revenge and retaliation of injury, which uniformly appeared in his conduct. He lightened the impoſts from off his people; and when preſſed by the courtiers to puniſh thoſe who had been his enemies and avowed opponents, he made that glorious reply worthy of eternal remembrance; "It becomes not a king "of France to revenge the quarrels of a duke "of Orleans."

Though bent to recover the kingdom of Naples from Frederick the new ſovereign, and equally determined to aſſert his title to the duchy of Milan, uſurped by Ludovico Sforza; a domeſtic concern, which entailed with it very important conſequences, claimed his early attention. The princeſs Jane, to whom he had been married more than twenty years, though endowed with the moſt eſtimable and amiable qualities, was not only incapable of producing children; but the deformity of her perſon rendered her an object of diſtaſte and averſion. On the other hand, Anne of Bretagne had retired into her duchy; and though the articles of her marriage with Charles the eighth, were ſuch as precluded her from the diſpoſal of her hand in caſe of his death, to the injury of the ſtate; yet policy required the ſtricteſt regard to thoſe meaſures which might ſecure to the crown ſo rich an acquiſition. She was beautiful in her perſon, though a little lame in one foot; yet in early youth, and had not only been beloved by Louis during the lifetime of her fa-

ther, Francis the ſecond, but it was ſuppoſed had not been inſenſible to, or unaffected by his paſſion. Theſe conjoined motives of the monarch and the man, induced Louis to apply to Alexander the ſixth for a diſſolution of his marriage: and the pope, whom political principles rendered ſubſervient to any purpoſes or views, immediately appointed commiſſioners, and ſent his ſon Cæſar Borgia into France, to decide the affair. They pronounced the union void and illegal, as having been effected by force: and the king, haſtening to Nantes, at which city Anne reſided, eſpouſed her ſolemnly, and conducted her to Blois, where he commonly held his court. Jane, ſubmiſſive in her diſgrace, and humble from a conſciouſneſs of her perſonal demerits, ſcarce attempted any reſiſtance to the mandate which deprived her of a crown; but retiring to Bourges, devoted her remaining days to piety, and having founded an order of monaſtic ſecluſion, took the veil in the nunnery ſhe had erected.

This affair tranſacted, the king directed his whole attention to Italy, and principally to the Milaneze. His claim was incontrovertible, in right of Valentina his grandmother; and this was rendered more apparent by the crimes and uſurpation of Ludovico Sforza. After having concluded an alliance with the Venetians, his forces entered Piedmont; and meeting ſcarce any reſiſtance, made a rapid conqueſt of the whole duchy, only the caſtle of Milan holding

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out a few days. Louis, on this proſperous intelligence, haſtened acroſs the mountains, entered the capital of his new dominions, habited in the ducal robes, and remained there near three months.

Sforza, who bent beneath the ſtorm, and had early retired into Germany, waited only the favourable moment to return: at his approach, every city opened to him its gates, and he was received again into Milan, from whence he had fled. This faint gleam of ſucceſs was quickly followed by a ſad reverſe. The Switzers whom he entertained in his ſervice, by a perfidy which even Sforza's character could not juſtify, delivered him up to the French general, diſguiſed as a common ſoldier, under which appearance he had hoped to effect his eſcape. He was conducted to Lyons, where Louis then reſided: but Sforza's repeated and flagitious enormities had ſteeled his boſom to the impreſſions of commiſeration or pardon; and without deigning to admit him to his preſence, the king removed him immediately to the caſtle of Loches in Touraine. At firſt, his confinement was very rigorous, and it is pretended that he was ſhut up in an iron cage; but during the latter years of his life, this ſeverity was mitigated; he had permiſſion to hunt, and a degree of liberty allowed him.

The complete reduction of all the Milaneze which followed Sforza's captivity, and the terror which Louis's arms ſpread through Italy,

rendered the conqueſt of Naples almoſt certain: but his weakneſs in admitting Ferdinand the catholic to divide the ſpoils which he might have entirely appropriated, was eventually ſubverſive of all his acquiſitions. Previous to the attack, a convention was made between the two princes, by which Naples, and the northern half of the kingdom was aſſigned to France; Ferdinand had Apulia and Calabria. Frederic, the reigning king, made no abler defence than his predeceſſors: after a timid and irreſolute oppoſition, finding himſelf reduced from royalty to the condition of an individual; and abandoned by all his ſubjects or adherents, he took the reſolution to throw himſelf on Louis's bounty. He demanded a ſafe conduct into France, which was granted him; and the king, with that generoſity which eminently ſhone in his conduct, afforded him an aſylum, and an annual penſion of thirty thouſand ecus, which was continued even after the expulſion of the French from Naples.

Meanwhile Ferdinand was not leſs diligent in ſecuring his ſhare of the Neapolitan territories. Gonſalvo de Cordova, the celebrated general, whom hiſtory has dignified with the title of "the Great Captain," made an eaſy conqueſt of the two provinces decreed to his maſter. Tarentum only made reſiſtance. Alfonſo, the heir to the crown, and ſon of Frederic, was ſhut up in it. His father, ſuppoſing it impregnable, had ſent him to this fortreſs, under the care of

two

two nobles attached to his intereſts: they apprehending every thing loſt, and repoſing on the ſolemn promiſes of Gonſalvo, who ſwore on the ſacraments, to leave the young prince his perfect liberty, capitulated, and ſurrendered the place: but the perfidious Spaniard, who ſported with oaths, and diſregarded the moſt binding compacts, detained Alfonſo priſoner, and ſent him to Ferdinand, who, though he treated him with lenity, never would releaſe him.

Scarce was Naples reduced under its new maſters, when diſſentions aroſe between them, on the ſubject of a ſmall tract of country claimed by both. The Spaniards firſt infringed the peace by acts of open hoſtility; but the king having commanded to repel force by force, his general, the duke of Nemours, took the field, and puſhed his advantages over the Spaniard to ſuch a length, that he was reduced to retire into Barletta, where the want of ammunition had nearly compelled him to ſurrender. At this juncture, when Louis was on the point of diſpoſſeſſing Ferdinand of all his diviſion, and fortune had uniformly attended on his arms, Philip the archduke, who had married Jane, the daughter of Ferdinand and Iſabel, paſſed thro' France: he ſaw the king at Lyons, and concluded a treaty with him in the name of his father-in-law. By the conditions of it, the two monarchs were bound to a ceſſation of arms; the provinces originally ceded to each were con-

firmed, and the lands in diſpute were to be ſequeſtered into the hands of the archduke.

In the conduct of the princes after this event, we trace in the ſtrongeſt manner their oppoſite genius and character. The ambaſſadors of Ferdinand who attended Philip, having ſworn to the execution of the agreement, under pain of excommunication, if violated or infringed, the heralds announced it to the two commanders in Naples. The duke of Nemours, who knew the uprightneſs and integrity of his king, heſitated not a moment to withdraw his forces: but Gonſalvo, hardened himſelf to the commiſſion of crimes, and repoſing with full ſecurity on the baſe and treacherous perfidy of Ferdinand, refuſed to act in compliance with the orders; he demanded an expreſs command to that purpoſe. Having received a reinforcement of Germans, he in turn attacked the French, routed them in two actions, killed the duke of Nemours, and not only made himſelf maſter of the city of Naples, but totally ſubdued the whole kingdom.

The archduke was in Savoy when he received the news of ſo notorious a breach of that public faith, for which he had pledged his own honour. Shocked at a conduct which marked its author with indelible infamy, he returned inſtantly into France, to put himſelf into Louis's power; while he diſpatched meſſengers to remonſtrate with his father-in-law on his treacherous connivance and approval of Gonſalvo's miſconduct,

miſconduct, and demanded the reſtitution of all he had conquered. Ferdinand wrapping himſelf in the duplicity of an equivocating and crooked policy, one time diſowned his ambaſſadors, and at another his general; offered to reſtore the kingdom to the captive Frederic, but ſecretly ſent orders to puſh the war in Naples to the abſolute extermination of the French.

Louis, great in his own virtue, and ſcorning theſe deſpicable ſubterfuges, ordered the miniſters of the king of Arragon to quit his dominions; and while, incapable himſelf of mean retaliation, he permitted the archduke, unmoleſted, to return into Flanders, though he might have detained him, he made that animating ſpeech to him at his departure.—"If," ſaid he, "your "father-in-law has been guilty of a perfidy, I "will not reſemble him; and I am infinitely "happier in the loſs of a kingdom which I know "how to reconquer, than to have ſtained my "honour, which I could never retrieve."

Irritated by a treatment ſo unkingly and deteſtable, Louis made new, but ineffectual efforts to regain his rights in Naples. Gonſalvo, the ableſt commander of his age, defeated all his attempts; and retained by military ſkill and ſuperior parts, the poſſeſſions which he had acquired by a breach of every principle of faith.

The death of Alexander the ſixth, and the acceſſion of Julius the ſecond to the pontificate, was likewiſe unfavourable to the affairs of France;

France; and the ill ſucceſs which from every quarter ſeemed to overwhelm him, threw the king into a violent fever, produced by anxiety and mortification. During the height of his diſtemper, as his death was apprehended to be imminent and inevitable, Anne of Bretagne, provident for her own ſafety, began to prepare for a retreat into her duchy: and in that intention, embarked a number of rich moveables in boats upon the Loire. The marechal de Gié, meeting them between Saumur and Nantes, gave orders to ſtop their progreſs; thinking it an act contradictory to the intereſt of the ſtate, that the queen ſhould remove at pleaſure all her jewels and effects out of the kingdom.—Louis recovered; and Anne, enraged at what ſhe deemed an action of the moſt preſumptuous inſolence, vindictive to exceſs, and in a capacity to revenge ſeverely the marechal's conduct, not only procured his exile from the court, and deprivation of every poſt he held; but puſhing her vengeance to a length the moſt unjuſtifiable and cruel, reduced him to extreme poverty, and left him to terminate his miſerable days amid diſgrace and indigence.

Frederic, the unfortunate king of Naples, expired about this time at Tours, in a mild and honourable captivity. His death was followed by that of the great queen of Caſtile, Iſabella; and her dominions devolving to the archduke Philip, in right of Jane his wife, changed the whole ſcale and ſyſtem of European politics. Ferdinand,

nand, who after ſeveral vain and fruitleſs efforts to retain the regency, was again reduced to his original kingdom of Arragon, reconciled himſelf with the king of France; and married his niece Germana de Foix, in hopes of iſſue which might exclude his grandchildren from the poſſeſſion of the two thrones.

Julius the ſecond's character, who had aſcended the papal chair, though leſs flagitious than that of his predeceſſor, was not leſs oppoſite to the genius of that religion under which he held the higheſt place. Haughty, ambitious, warlike, ſplendid, and enterprizing, nature had deſigned him for the helmet, not the tiara, and formed him to ſhine in camps, rather than in conclaves. Politically ungrateful, and ſinking the prieſt and the individual in the prince, he forgot the protection which Louis had extended to him under Alexander's pontificate, when he found a refuge from his generoſity. Jealous of his retaining a power in Italy which, might be fatal to the little potentates among whom it was divided, he exerted all the powers of his turbulent and reſtleſs genius, in exciting enemies to the French; and unreſtrained either by the ſanctity of his character, or advanced period of life, he did not ſcruple to appear in arms, and lead on his troops in perſon.

The archduke Philip's ſudden and unexpected death again reſtored to Ferdinand the adminiſtration he had loſt. As he was in Italy when this event happened, an interview took place

place at Savona between him and Louis the twelfth. The former's terrors leſt the king of France ſhould oppoſe his deſigns on the regency of Caſtile, was his concealed motive to it. They again renewed their alliance, and ſwore to the ſtrict obſervance of the articles of peace; but Ferdinand, who knew no principle of public or private fidelity, and only ſacrificed to his intereſted views, diſregarded and violated every condition on his return into Spain.

The great league of Cambray followed ſoon after. One cannot but conſider with aſtoniſhment mingled with indignation, an union of the two greateſt kings in Europe, the emperor, and the pope, againſt a ſmall, though opulent republic. Louis was guilty of a ſtill greater error, in allying himſelf with his three inveterate and natural enemies, Ferdinand, Maximilian, and Julius, againſt the Venetians, his only ſure and firm ally beyond the mountains. The battle of Ghiera-d'Adda, gained over Alviano their general, reduced the ſtate to the verge of ruin; and had the emperor improved the deplorable circumſtances of their defeat with celerity, Venice herſelf had probably been ſwallowed up by this prodigious confederacy. She averted the final blow, but could never retrieve her former luſtre or extent of territory; and Louis, who was rather influenced by reſentment than political motives in this affair, had but too much reaſon to repent the error he had

had committed, during the future part of his reign.

The death of the cardinal of Amboiſe, firſt miniſter of ſtate, was another loſs to the kingdom. He was one of the moſt virtuous and diſintereſted ſtateſmen, of whom any hiſtory has made mention. Equally a ſtranger to pride and to avarice; a cardinal, with only one eccleſiaſtical benefice, and ſolely occupied by the intereſts of his ſovereign and his country, he was lamented with their grateful tears.

Julius the ſecond, bent on the aggrandizement of the papacy, and the expulſion of the French from Italy, no longer obſerved any meaſures with Louis: while the king, actuated by ſcruples of a timid ſuperſtition, forbade his generals to make incurſions on the lands of the church, and ſpared the pontiff from reverence to his character. Emboldened by this treatment, he proceeded to the greateſt lengths of tyranny and inordinate ambition. Deſirous of annexing Ferrara to the patrimony of St. Peter, he ordered his general to lay ſiege to Mirandola, though in the midſt of a moſt ſevere winter, and though by no ſhadow of equity could he juſtify the attempt. The advances not being made with that rapidity he expected, he repaired thither himſelf; appeared in the trenches at ſeventy years of age, encouraged and exhorted his troops to the attack; and on its ſurrender, cauſed himſelf to be carried into the

the city in military triumph, through the breach in the wall.

Roused by these acts of violence and hostility, the king at length sent orders to Chamont to spare the pope no longer. The commander, in consequence, pressed his holiness so vigorously, that he obliged him to retire to Ravenna; and would have compelled him to terms of pacification, had he not been seized at this conjuncture with a mortal distemper. Touched with horror at the crime he had committed in bearing arms against the holy father; and yielding under the pressures of approaching death, to all the weakness of abject superstition, he sent to implore his forgiveness and absolution. The operations of war stood still, and Julius had time to recover. Fortune, which was not so favourable to him as the influence of religious prejudice, soon however reduced him again to a situation the most perilous and critical: he apprehended his degradation from the papacy; and saw Rome itself exposed to the army of the king, without any capacity of defence. He was even on the verge of recurring to Louis's generosity, and opening a treaty with him; when having received advice, that, tired with the scruples and importunities of the queen, he had forbid his general to attack the territories of the church; he resumed his wonted haughtiness, revoked his intentions of peace, and prepared himself for new campaigns.

In

In this century, when the minds of men, cultivated and enlarged by learning, expanded by philoſophy, and diveſted of prejudice or the ſlavery of preſcription, preſume to view objects as they are by the ſteady light of reaſon; we are amazed at the weakneſs of our anceſtors: and ſurvey with mingled wonder and indignation, an Alexander or a Julius, revered amid a thouſand enormities; and exerting a tyrannical ſway over the cabinets of princes, or conduct of generals, by the ſole terrors of their ſacerdotal office, unaccompanied with any virtues, or even the appearances of morality and decorum.

Unrepreſſed by age and ill ſucceſs, the pope meditated freſh ſchemes of conqueſt. Louis, the virtuous, the merciful, and the good, was the conſtant object of his animoſity. He entered into an alliance with Ferdinand the moſt faithleſs of princes, againſt him; and Venice acceded to the league, which was named by a mockery of religion, "the holy." They took Breſcia, and beſieged Bologna—when Gaſton de Foix appeared. This young hero, nephew to the king, had ſcarce attained his twentieth year. Louis fondly loved him; and diſcerning all the fire of military genius in him, entruſted to his ſupreme command the army in Italy. His firſt exploits not only juſtified the choice his uncle made, but elevated him to a rank above all the captains of his age. During the height of the ſiege of Bologna, he entered the city amid

amid a prodigious fall of ſnow unperceived by the aſſailants, who covered with confuſion, inſtantly retired from before it. He loſt not a moment in puſhing his advantage; defeated the Venetian commander who oppoſed his march towards Breſcia; and attacking their entrenchments with only ſix thouſand choſen ſoldiers, put eight thouſand of the enemy to the ſword, and totally drove them from the ſurrounding country. Theſe ſplendid ſucceſſes were ſoon followed by the great battle of Ravenna. Gaſton triumphed over the army of the confederates; but, like Guſtavus Adolphus, he expired in the arms of victory. His own ardour and youthful impetuoſity of valour were the cauſes of his lamented death. Deſirous to render the glory of the day complete, he purſued with a ſmall troop, a body of four thouſand Spaniards, who retreated in good order. They ſurrounded him; and he was killed after having combated with the moſt heroic courage, pierced with twenty-two wounds. The Italians regarded him as a prodigy, and he was ſurnamed "the thunder-bolt of Italy," from the violence of his movement, the rapidity of his progreſs and the ſuddenneſs of his extinction *.

Louis

* Brantome enumerates ſeveral minute circumſtances, preceding and accompanying his death. The action was already gained, when the celebrated Chevalier Bayard, ſeeing the young prince covered with the blood and brains of a ſoldier who had been killed cloſe to him, rode up, and demanded, if he was wounded? "No," replied Gaſton, "but I have wounded

Louis was greatly affected at his nephew's untimely fate; and the ſequel proved how much the affairs of war depend on one man. The animating ſpirit which diffuſed life and vigour, was extinct: diſſentions aroſe in the victorious army, no longer united under one great chieftain. Julius, who overcome with diſmay, was ready to implore the clemency of the king, was re-encouraged by Ferdinand and the Vene-

" wounded many of the enemy." Bayard implored him on no conſideration to quit the main body of the army; and to prevent his troops from pillaging, while he purſued himſelf the flying ſquadrons. This wholeſome and wiſe advice was overborne by the young hero's martial fury. A Gaſcon runaway having informed him, that a body of Spaniards not only maintained their ground, but had repulſed ſome of his own forces; he inſtantly charged them in perſon, crying out, " Who loves me, follows me."——This body of veterans were advantageouſly poſted, near a piece of water: they diſcharged their harquebuſſes, and then lowering their pikes, received firmly the attack. Gaſton's horſe was firſt killed, and he himſelf overborne by numbers; only about twenty gentlemen had accompanied him, among whom was Lautrec, afterwards ſo renowned under Francis the firſt, in the wars of Italy. He was of the houſe of Foix, and nearly allied by blood to Gaſton, whom he defended with the moſt heroic bravery—crying out, when no l nger able to ward off the blows aimed at him, " Spare the general, brother to your queen " Germana, and you ſhall have immenſe ranſom!"——No exclamations or intreaties cou'd however ſave the prince; and Lautrec himſelf fell by his ſide, covered with wounds, and left upon the plain as dead. Bayard was almoſt driven to madneſs when on his return he learned his general's fate: and into ſo great a conſternation were the French thrown by this unexpected diſaſter, that, had the enemy rallied and returned to the charge, they would infallibly have been defeated.

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tians. A ſeries of diſaſtrous circumſtances ſucceeded each other, and ruined the French affairs: inſtead of giving law to all Italy, as might have been expected, they experienced a ſad reverſe.

The Switzers breaking in upon the Milaneſe, almoſt deſtitute of defence, re-conquered it, after a ſubjection of twelve years, and replaced Maximilian Sforza in the duchy. Genoa revolted, and created a new duke. Henry the eighth of England, excited by the artifices of his father-in-law Ferdinand, ſent to declare war againſt France; and Maximilian baſely deſerting all his engagements, went over to the oppoſite party, and even formed a new alliance with the pope. The king of Arragon, improving the opportunity which this union of ſo many powers afforded him againſt Louis, attacked the little kingdom of Navarre, and ſoon reduced it to ſubjection. Superior force, and a bull of Julius, poſterior to the conqueſt, were the only pretexts which Ferdinand could employ, for this cruel outrage on a prince unarmed, and who had never rendered himſelf obnoxious to his diſpleaſure. The king of France made every effort to replace him on the throne, and even ſent an army into Navarre, but without ſucceſs: he was engaged with too many enemies, who attempted to overpower him on all hands.

The death of Julius ſeemed to promiſe better fortune in Italy. Leo the tenth, a name renowned

nowned in arts and liberal ſcience, opened his ſhort, but memorable reign. New efforts were made upon the Milaneſe in alliance with the Venetians. Sforza was driven to the laſt extremities by the French forces; only Como and Novarra perſiſted to hold out—but all theſe laurels withered in leſs time than they had been gathered; and after the loſs of an engagement, where all the Gaſcon infantry was hewn in pieces, ſcarce could la Tremouille, wounded in the leg, conduct the cavalry in ſafety back to Savoy.

Meanwhile, Henry and Maximilian uniting againſt Louis, joined to attack Picardy; and the Switzers, elate with the advantages they had gained, entered Burgundy, and laid ſiege to Dijon, with two-and-twenty thouſand men. By means of a treaty humiliating though neceſſary to France, theſe latter enemies were induced to return into their own country: but the king of England and the emperor gained the battle of Guinegate, took Tournay, and ſpread terror through all the neighbouring provinces. Louis, though ſhaken by ſuch a concurrence of calamitous accidents, ſupported with magnanimity the ſhock: but wearied by the ſupplications of the queen, and hoping that Leo might aid his arms which he had hitherto oppoſed, he ſent two prelates to make his ſubmiſſions to the ſee of Rome, and to teſtify his contrition and penitence for his paſt offences. This act which may be intirely attributed to the

the influence of Ann of Bretagne over his mind, was the laſt of her life. She died at the caſtle of Blois, of a diſtemper cauſed by the improper treatment ſhe received in her laſt lying-in, and only thirty-ſeven years of age.

The French hiſtorians, biaſſed by the dowry which ſhe brought to the kingdom, have exhauſted themſelves in panegyrics on this princeſs. Her piety, her chaſtity, her liberality, her attachment to the two ſucceſſive kings her huſbands; her capacity and ſpirit, have all been ſubjects of eulogium. Imaginary and ideal qualities have been added to complete the picture. I muſt confeſs her conduct as a queen does not appear to juſtify theſe extravagant encomiums. Force and neceſſity alone reduced her to give her hand to Charles the eighth; nor though blameleſs as a wife, did ſhe ever love the people or country over which ſhe reigned. On the contrary, ſhe ever cheriſhed the moſt avowed predilection for the houſe of Auſtria; and endeavoured by every exertion of addreſs or perſuaſion, to induce the king to marry his eldeſt daughter Claude to the young archduke, who was afterwards Charles the fifth. Diſappointed in this intention by Louis's better principles, and attentive regard to France, ſhe attempted to transfer the ſucceſſion of Bretagne to her youngeſt daughter, and to marry her to the ſame prince. Though both theſe ſchemes, ſo big with ruinous conſequences, were rendered abortive; ſhe yet had ſufficient

ficient influence over Louis, to retard and even totally prevent during her life, the conſummation of the princeſs Claude's nuptials with Francis count d' Angouleſme, to whom the united voice of the nation had deſtined her, as preſumptive heir of the crown: and her death, which only preceded that of the king by a ſingle year, may be regarded as happy to the ſtate, in every point of view. Her bigotted veneration, and blind ſubmiſſion to popes or prieſts, was highly detrimental to the king's affairs; whoſe ſucceſſes were always checked in the midway, by her importunate entreaties in their favour. Unforgiving and vindictive, ſhe never pardoned an injury, or knew any limits to her reſentment of it. Notwithſtanding theſe inconteſtable defects, ſhe was infinitely dear to her huſband, who was during ſome time inconſolable for her loſs. He remained ſeveral days ſhut up in his chamber, entirely devoted to grief; ordered all the comedians or muſicians to quit the court, and refuſed audience to every miniſter or ambaſſador who did not appear in deep mourning. Yielding however to motives of public good, which ever formed the line of his actions, he conferred his eldeſt daughter on the count d'Angouleſme; and the nuptials were ſolemnized at St. Germain-en Laye *.

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* Several conjoined motives, not totally void of weight, privately conſidered, rendered Anne of Bretagne peculiarly averſe

The death of the queen, together with Francis's marriage, gave a new face to affairs. Louiſa of Savoy, mother to the heir of the crown, began to diſplay her ſhining, but dangerous character: and Louis, grown wiſe by experience, tender of his people, and frugal of the revenues, viewed with a melancholy foreſight, the profuſion and expenſive munificence, which the count d'Angouleſme's character predicted. In this anticipation of the evils which ſuch qualities would probably entail on this kingdom, he uſed frequently to exclaim, "Ce gros gars-la gatera tout!" It is even highly to be ſuſpected, that this formed one of the great motives to his third marriage; though the deſire of effecting a cloſe union and alliance with England, formed a more oſtenſible pretext.

Henry the eighth had a ſiſter of uncommon beauty. The duke de Longueville, who had been taken priſoner at the battle of Guinegate, being ſent over to negociate a treaty of peace, firſt opened the overtures for this match, which were immediately accepted. The princeſs was conducted into France; received at Boulogne

averſe to this union.——She always flattered herſelf with hopes of male iſſue by the king. She deteſted madame Louiſa, Francis's mother, whoſe unſubmitting ſpirit never bent beneath her. Above all, ſhe feared and foreſaw her child's unhappy days with Francis. This was too much verified in the reſult. She was by no means beautiful; and her huſband, amorous and inconſtant, never loved her: and if he treated her with reſpect himſelf, could not, or did not, exact the ſame behaviour from his mother.

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by a ſplendid train, at the head of which was the count d'Angouleſme, and married at Abbeville to the king. She was in early youth, gay, and fond of pleaſure: her heart, ſuſceptible of the impreſſions of tenderneſs and paſſion, had already engaged itſelf to a young Engliſh lord, whom Henry had created duke of of Suffolk, and to whom he had even intended to give his ſiſter's hand. Under theſe circumſtances, it cannot be ſuppoſed that Louis, a valetudinarian ſinking into years, worn by the fatigues of war, tormented with the gout, and occupied continually with the recollection of his late queen, could be a very acceptable huſband. Francis, amorous and gallant to exceſs, was captivated with her charms: and it is pretended that he might and would have puſhed his good fortune to the utmoſt length; if political conſiderations, and his mother's reprehenſions, had not, though with difficulty, impoſed a reſtraint on his deſires*.

* I find it impoſſible not to enter a little into this ſtory, curious and intereſting in itſelf, and on which the French writers have been very inquiſitive and diffuſe. Moſt of the cotemporary authors relate very circumſtantially an anecdote, which, if true, puts it beyond all doubt, that Francis had gained the moſt complete and tender intereſt in the young queen's affections. Preſſed by the importunities of her lover, and yielding to his entreaties, ſhe at length granted him a rendezvous in the palace of the Tournelles; and there can be little queſtion that ſuch an interview would have been deciſive. The count habited himſelf in the moſt gallant manner, and was haſtening to the queen's apartment, when he was met by Grignaux,

Meanwhile Louis touched the verge of life. His nuptial pleaſures conducted him to the the tomb. Forgetting his maxim which he uſed frequently to repeat, that "Love is the king "of young perſons, but the tyrant of old "men," he abandoned himſelf to his immoderate fondneſs for the new queen. His conſtitution, already ſhaken, and debilitated by a

Grignaux, an ancient gentleman who had been in the ſervice of Anne of Bretagne. Struck with the more than common magnificence of his dreſs, knowing his predominant weakneſs, and miſtruſtful of his intentions, Grignaux rudely ſtopt him; and addreſſing him, demanded whither was he going ſo haſtily. Francis refuſed to anſwer ſatisfactorily to this queſtion —— "Donnez vous en bien garde, Monſeigneur," ſaid he frowning; "-paſques Dieu! vous vous jouez à vous donner "un maître; il ne faut qu'un accident pour que vous reſtiez "Comte d'Angouleſme toute votre vie."——This bold and peremptory remonſtrance was not loſt on the perſon to whom it was directed. Francis pauſed on the very threſhold of his miſtreſs's chamber: love and empire diſputed for an inſtant in his boſom. The latter triumphed; and ſubmitting to Grignaux's counſel, he had either the magnanimity or the weakneſs to ſuffer himſelf to be led away from the temptation, and conducted out of the palace.

Notwithſtanding the air of the marvellous ſpread through this adventure, it muſt be confeſſed that there is nothing in it either unnatural or improbable. Brantome not only relates it, but adds, "that Mary attempted to counterfeit pregnancy "on the death of the king." Madame Louiſa was not to be ſo over-reached, when a crown depended on the fact, and ſoon diſcovered the deceit. To this laſt part, however, no faith is due, nor does any other author aſſert it. Beſides, it is univerſally allowed that ſhe was exceedingly attached to Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. Her conduct towards him, and marriage, put this beyond a doubt. Scarce three months elapſed between Louis's death, and her ſecond nuptials.

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ſlow fever, could not long ſuſtain theſe unuſual efforts. While elated with hope of future conqueſts, and ſecure on the ſide of England, he determined again to attack the Milaneſe, and prepared a conſiderable army to paſs the Alps, he was ſeized with a dyſentery at the palace of the Tournelles in Paris; which reduced him ſo low, that he breathed his laſt a few days after, at fifty-three years of age.

He was the moſt virtuous prince that France ever ſaw reign; perhaps who has reigned in Europe. It was proclaimed in the hall of the palace at his death, "Le bon roi Louis douze, Pere du peuple, eſt mort!"— The tears of ſorrow and commiſeration which he uſed to ſhed, when the neceſſities of war or ſtate obliged him to levy an additional ſubſidy, however ſmall, on his people, prove how juſtly he merited the appellation of their parent. His clemency, his benevolence, and unbounded philanthropy, were not inferior to Henry the fourth's: nor were theſe benign qualities obſcured and diminiſhed by that unhappy and frantic paſſion for women, by thoſe pernicious foibles which accompanied the founder of the houſe of Bourbon to the grave. He was himſelf a pattern of conjugal fidelity; and his court, decent and reſtrained, neither knew the elegant politeneſs, or the luxurious gallantry, which Francis the firſt introduced on his acceſſion to the throne. His valour and military

capacity had been diſtinguiſhed in many campaigns. His temper open, candid, and chearful, made him eaſy of acceſs, and gracious to the higheſt degree. He loved letters, and protected their authors; but did not extend to them that princely liberality, which has immortalized his ſucceſſor. Through his whole character, we trace none of thoſe ſplendid and glittering vices, which in kings are too apt to dazzle and even delight; which carry in them that deluſive magic, ſo calculated to impoſe on the human mind. His encomiaſts were not poets and men of genius, prone to proſtitute their talents. The voice of a whole people, their ſimple and unembelliſhed lamentations, were his beſt panegyric. His perſon reſembled the mind which animated it. Not elegant or beautiful, but amiable, intereſting, and agreeable.

For his vices I ſearch in vain. The ſhades of his character I mean not to hide. His attachment to the queen ſometimes degenerated into uxorioufneſs, and cauſed him to commit errors very injurious to his affairs. He was duped by Ferdinand, and inſulted by Julius.—In him expired the elder branch of the houſe of Orleans, and that of Angouleſme ſucceeded.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Acceſſion and character of Francis the firſt.—Character of Louiſa counteſs d'Angouleſme.—Battle of Marignano.—Death of Ferdinand of Arragon and the emperor Maximilian.—Interview of Francis and Henry the eighth.—Commencement of the wars between the king and the emperor.—Character of Charles of Bourbon.—Of Bonnivet.—Death of Leo the tenth.—Milan loſt.—Execution of Semblençai.—Conſpiracy of the conſtable of Bourbon.—Minute circumſtances of his treaſon and flight.—Death of the queen.—The admiral Bonnivet enters Italy.—Bourbon lays ſiege to Marſeilles.—Francis purſues him over the Alps.—Battle of Pavia.—Minute enumeration of the circumſtances of the king's impriſonment.—Death of Bonnivet.—Francis's confinement and removal to Madrid.—Meaſures of the regent.—The king's rigorous captivity.—Illneſs.—Viſit of the ducheſs of Alençon, his ſiſter.—Releaſe.—Entry into his dominions.—Commencement of the ducheſs of Eſtampes' favour.

THE acceſſion of Francis the firſt to the crown, was accompanied with all thoſe circumſtances which could diffuſe over it a particular luſtre. Nature had laviſhly endowed him with every quality of mind and perſon, formed to intoxicate both his people and himſelf.

He had only paſſed his twentieth year a few months. Finely formed, with the mien and appearance of a hero, his bodily accompliſhments were not inferior to his external figure. He excelled in the exerciſes of a cavalier, and puſhed the lance with diſtinguiſhed vigour and addreſs. Courteous in his manners, bounteous in his temper even to prodigality; the nobility, whom Louis the twelfth's œconomical frugality, and more reſerved deportment, had kept at greater diſtance, crowded round their youthful ſovereign with mingled pleaſure and admiration. Eloquent in the cabinet, and courageous in the field, he ſhone alike in arts or arms; and while he extended his generoſity to ſcience and genius, impatiently panted for the occaſion of ſignalizing his proweſs, and acquiring the glory of a warrior *.

The ſituation of affairs at the death of the late king, gave immediate field to this martial ſpirit. Francis, equally determined to conquer the Milaneſe as his predeceſſor had been,

* We may judge of the eclat with which Francis opened his reign, and how high was his reputation through all Europe, by the brilliant colours, with which Guicciardini has drawn his character. The portrait is wondrouſly flattering—"Delle "virtù, della magnanimità, dello ingegno, et ſpirito generoſo di "coſtui, s'haveva univerſalmente tante ſperanzza, che ciaſcuno "confeſſava non eſſere gia per moltiſſimi anni pervenuto alcuno, "con maggiore eſpettatione alla corona. Perche gli conciliava "ſomma gratia il fiore dell'eta, che era di 22 anni, la bellezza "egregia del corpo, la liberalità grandiſſima, la humanita "ſomma con tutti, et la notitia piena di molte coſe."

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laid inſtant and open claim to that duchy; nor did he either withdraw his pretenſions, or ſuſpend his preparations, in conſequence of the formidable alliance, which Ferdinand, Maximilian, Sforza, the Switzers, and ſoon after Leo the tenth, formed for its preſervation. While he repaired himſelf to Lyons, a part of his army croſſed the mountains. After having ſurmounted infinite difficulties in the carriage of the artillery over rocks and precipices, they effected their paſſage; and uſed ſuch extraordinary celerity as to ſurprize Proſper Colonna, who lay encamped with a thouſand cavalry upon the Po, juſt as he was about to ſit down to table, totally unapprehenſive of their approach.

At this news, the king ſet forward to join his forces; having firſt deferred the regency during his abſence, to the counteſs d'Angouleſme his mother. She acted too high and important a part under the reign of Francis, not to enter minutely into her character. She connected all the great qualities and defects of an elevated, but ill-regulated mind. The beauty of her perſon was ſcarce exceeded by that of any woman in the court; and, like her ſon, ſhe ſurpaſſed in all thoſe accompliſhments of body, which confer elegance and grace. During the years of retirement which ſhe had ſpent at the caſtle of Cognac in Angoumois after her huſband's death, the education of her ſon had conſtituted her ſole occupation: and to her care on this important point, the nation was indebt-

ed for the greater part of thoſe mature and manly qualifications which rendered their ſovereign an object of love and homage.—Her ambition and thirſt of power were in ſome meaſure juſtified by her talents for government. She poſſeſſed courage perſonal and political; a magnanimity of ſoul undepreſſed even in adverſity; uncommon penetration, firmneſs, and capacity.—But theſe endowments were ſullied and contraſted by yet ſuperior faults. Not leſs vindictive than Anne of Bretagne, ſhe trampled on public or private feelings of whatever nature to gratify her reſentment; and borne away by the impetuoſity of her paſſions, abuſed the influence which ſhe poſſeſſed over the king, to purpoſes the moſt pernicious and criminal. Rapacious of the national treaſures, and avaricious in the accumulation of her own; with all the little foibles of her ſex, and a ſlave to more than female vanity; her boſom was yet ſuſceptible of, and open to, all that ſtorm of violent and contradictory emotions, which love and jealouſy occaſion in the human heart. Such was the celebrated Louiſa of Savoy.

Meanwhile Francis having put himſelf at the head of his army, marched forward into the Milaneſe. All the cities opened their gates to him without a blow; and the Switzers, uncertain whether to treat or give battle, retiring before him, he encamped at Marignano, only a league diſtant from Milan. A reinforcement of ten thouſand men arriving to their aid, determined

ed them to the latter; and actuated by a ſort of military frenzy, which the exhortations of the cardinal of Sion had inſpired, they came furiouſly to attack the French in their lines. Hiſtory ſcarce affords any inſtance of an action diſputed with ſo enraged an animoſity. It began about four in the afternoon in the month of October, and laſted more than three hours after the night cloſed in. Laſſitude and darkneſs interpoſed a ceſſation of arms, without diminiſhing the ardour of the combatants, or deciding the fortune of the day; and ſo intimately were they mingled during the heat of the conteſt, that many ſquadrons repoſed among thoſe of the enemy. Francis himſelf, after having diſplayed the higheſt intrepidity, laid himſelf down upon the carriage of a piece of artillery; and like Darius after the battle of Arbela, is ſaid to have ſeized with eagerneſs a little water mixed with dirt and blood, which one of his ſoldiers brought him in a caſque, to aſſuage his thirſt. With the dawn of light, the Switzers renewed the charge; but at length were repulſed with prodigious carnage: and a part of them being cut to pieces in a wood where they attempted to ſhelter themſelves, the reſt retreated in good order. Ten thouſand remained upon the field.

The terror which this victory inſpired, together with the return of the Swiſs troops into their own country, left Sforza almoſt deſtitute of any aſſiſtance. He retired however into the

caſtle of Milan, and endeavoured to defend himſelf in that fortreſs: but finding it impracticable, he ſurrendered it to the conſtable Charles of Bourbon, on honorary conditions; and a very ample penſion being aſſigned him in France, was conducted into that kingdom. All the duchy immediately received the French.

This conqueſt was followed by an interview between Francis and Leo. It took place at Bologna. The artful pontiff flattered the young monarch, and dextrouſly bent him to the purpoſes he wiſhed: their conference ended, the king returned in haſte to Lyons, where his mother waited for him, and his arrival was ſignalized by acclamations of triumph.

Ferdinand king of Arragon expired at this time of a dropſy and atrophy, occaſioned by the incentives which his queen Germana of Foix had adminiſtered to him, in hopes of iſſue. His own hereditary dominions, together with thoſe of Iſabella, deſcended to young Charles the archduke. This event did not prevent the emperor from making a great effort on Italy. He broke in upon the Milaneſe with near forty thouſand Switzers and Germans, and even laid ſiege to Milan: but the tardy irreſolution which ever characterized all Maximilian's enterprizes, giving time to the conſtable to approach the city, though with inferior forces, he retired; and his troops ill paid, were with difficulty kept together, and at length diſbanded.

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If the perſonal character of Francis, and the uniform ſucceſs which had hitherto attended on him, might with reaſon give umbrage to the little powers of Italy; that of Charles was yet more alarming, as more ample and extenſive. To the united realms of Caſtile and Arragon, he joined Naples, the Netherlands, and the Indies; and ſuperadded to theſe was the expectation of the imperial crown, which Maximilian's age and infirmities ſeemed to render near at hand. Francis himſelf foreſaw the gathering ſtorm, and attempted to diſſipate or delay it by a treaty concluded at Montpelier, which was ſoon after followed by another with Henry the eighth of England: but the death of Maximilian broke down theſe inſufficient barriers; and opening a field of competition ſo important and uncommon, laid the baſis of private animoſity and public wars, which though ſometimes ſuſpended, were never terminated or adjuſted, during the lives of the two rivals.

The emperor died at Lintz upon the Danube, while he was employed in attempts to gain the electoral ſuffrages, for his grandſon's nomination as king of the Romans. Charles and Francis inſtantly declared themſelves candidates for the empire, though without any external or apparent marks of mutual antipathy: it was ſoon decided, and the former aſcended the imperial throne.

This increaſe of ſplendour and of power yet farther alarmed the king; and his diſappointed ambition

ambition conſpiring with his political terrors, from the union of ſo many ſtates under one ſovereign, conduced to haſten an interview previouſly agreed on between him and Henry. It took place between Ardres and Guiſnes in the month of June. A magnificence unequalled, and which reſulted from the temper of the two princes, ſplendid, profuſe, and vain, made the ſpot retain the name of "the field of the cloth of gold." It laſted ten or twelve days; tournaments, banquets, and every ſpecies of diverſion were exhibited. The queens of either monarch honoured it with their preſence; and Francis expended in this empty ſpectacle, uſeleſs to his kingdom, a greater ſum than Charles had diſtributed to acquire the imperial crown. It was attended with no durable or ſolid friendſhip between the kings. By a ſtroke of policy without eclat, but more ſage and effectual, the young emperor had paſſed into England previous to the viſit; and entered into connections with Henry, which experience proved to be much more permanent and binding.

While the ceremony of Charles's coronation was performed at Aix-la-Chapelle, Francis made an unſucceſsful effort to reconquer the little kingdom of Navarre. Thoſe extraordinary and ſudden reverſes of fortune which mark this whole reign, were equally viſible here. Pampelona was taken, and the whole ſurrounding country reduced to ſubjection; but

but the raſhneſs and imprudence of the French commander ſoon reſtored to Spain all ſhe had loſt, and obliged him to evacuate his new conqueſt.

Numberleſs ſources of diſcord fomented the natural rivalſhip of the two monarchs; and Charles more cautious, and carrying his views farther into futurity than the king of France, had already entered into a ſtrict alliance with Leo the tenth, and fixed the wavering pontiff in his intereſts. The re-eſtabliſhment of Franciſco Sforza, Maximilian's brother, in the duchy of Milan, was the grand connecting tie of this confederacy. So viſibly replete with future woes did it appear, that Chievres, the emperor's governor and preceptor, when he received the news, expired of ſorrow, in the ſad anticipation of the calamities which muſt reſult from it; often repeating, "Ah how ma-"ny evils!"—His prediction was but too exactly verified.

A ſingular accident befel Francis at this time.—He was at Romorantin in Berri during the winter: according to the manners of the age, when an exertion of vigour or activity characteriſed and conſtituted almoſt every diverſion, the king, with a ſmall band of nobles attacked the count de St. Pol's houſe, who defended it with another party. Snow-balls were uſed by the aſſailants: the ſeigneur de Lorges, one of the oppoſite ſide, unfortunately threw down a torch of wood, which ſtruck the king upon

upon the head, and wounded him ſeverely. He was long confined by this blow; and as it became neceſſary to cut off his hair, he never would ſuffer it to grow again, but introduced the faſhion of wearing the beard long, and the hair ſhort; which ſubſiſted generally in Europe till the reign of Louis the thirteenth, when the ancient cuſtom was reſumed.

The war which had long menaced, at length began. Both princes, concealing in ſome degree their animoſity, and preſerving the laſt appearances, only abetted and ſupported their reſpective vaſſals. The deſire common to each, of gaining the king of England, who profeſſed himſelf the arbiter of their diſputes, obliged to a certain moderation and delicacy: but this veil was ſoon withdrawn; and Francis, at the head of a gallant army, impatient to ſignalize his valour, and renew the laurels won at Marignano, faced his antagoniſt on the banks of the Schelde.—Here began the fatal train of errors, which in the event reduced France to the moſt calamitous condition. The command of the van belonged to Charles of Bourbon, in right of his office as conſtable: but the king, who never loved him, and whom the reſentment of his mother had ſtill farther prepoſſeſſed in his diſfavour, choſe to confide this important truſt to the duke of Alençon, firſt prince of the blood. Not ſatisfied with this cruel and unjuſt affront, he added to it another not leſs injurious to his own fame. The emperor, deſirous

ſirous of avoiding an engagement, and fearful that from the vicinity of their forces, he might be unavoidably compelled to it, diſlodged with ſome confuſion, and retired under cover of a thick fog to a greater diſtance. Bourbon ſaw the opportunity, and implored his ſovereign to profit of it; but Francis, jealous of a participation which muſt deprive him of part of the honour, and preferring the gratification of his own pique to more glorious and ſalutary principles, rejected with a cold contempt the conſtable's advice; and refuſed to ſeize the occaſion, which never returned, of combating his rival in perſon.

Theſe repeated inſults ſunk deep into Bourbon's mind, though as yet they produced no apparent effect. Stung however with the preference given to the duke of Alençon, ſo contrary to equity or reaſon; he could not prevent himſelf from ſaying, conſcious of the quarter from whence he was attacked, "That "the king had followed the impreſſions of a "woman, who had no more regard to juſtice, "than ſhe had honour." The great lines of his character, which form a contraſt to thoſe of Francis, contributed to encreaſe their mutual diſlike. Of a ſteady courage, attempered, and ever maſter of itſelf, he was calculated to command, and capable of the moſt arduous military atchievements. No general of his age poſſeſſed in ſo extended a degree, the capacity of conciliating the affections of the ſoldiery, and moulding

moulding them to all his purpoſes. Magnanimous, and liberal where prudence required it, he was naturally œconomical. Silent, reflective, and inclined to taciturnity, he did not cultivate the arts of ingratiating himſelf: but wrapped in a haughty virtue, which diſdained to ſtoop even to the honourable means of acquiring favour or popularity, he refuſed to owe any thing except to his own merits *.

Qualities,

* Charles of Bourbon was the ſecond ſon of Gilbert de Montpenſier, who died at Puzzoli, after an unſucceſsful attempt to preſerve the kingdom of Naples, under Charles the eighth. His elder brother, by the moſt wonderful and unexampled inſtance of filial piety, which hiſtory has ever preſerved, expired on the tomb of his father, from the pungent and exquiſite feelings of diſtreſs. His younger brother fell at the battle of Marignano.—The French writers ſeem generally to inſinuate or aſſert, in terms more or leſs poſitive, that the counteſs d'Angouleſme had given him proofs the moſt undiſguiſed, of her attachment; and that the indifference he firſt expreſſed, and the diſdain with which he afterwards treated this paſſion, proved the ſource of all his future indignities and calamities.

By his marriage with Suſanna of Bourbon, he inherited the immenſe poſſeſſions of that houſe; his own paternal fortunes being limited and ſlender. Louis the twelfth had chiefly conduced to form this union, by his authority and perſonal interpoſition. When the nuptials were ſolemnized, the young ducheſs made a ſolemn and formal contract, by which, in caſe of her deceaſe, ſhe called to her ſucceſſion Charles her huſband, and endowed him with all her lands, rights, and pretenſions. The nature of this donation in preſence of the reigning ſovereign, and confirmed by his expreſs conſent and approval, ſeemed to ſecure it from any doubts relative to its validity—but as Suſanna, at the time of the bequeſt, wanted two or three months to be of age; this unimportant and unneceſſary form became eventually the pretext, on which Louiſa and the chancellor

Qualities, ſuch as thoſe I have depictured, are not framed to raiſe their poſſeſſors in courts, and leaſt of all in that of Francis the firſt. Bonnivet, who engroſſed the royal grace and patronage; and whoſe aſcendancy over his maſter's mind, produced the moſt deplorable conſequences to France, is an evincing proof of my aſſertion. He reſembled the firſt Villiers, duke of Buckingham, in many points of view. The handſomeſt cavalier of the court, he was likewiſe the moſt arrogant, vain, and preſumptuous: born with no talents for war, except courage, he yet had the command of armies entruſted to his care. Gallant and amorous, he was acceptable to women; and peculiarly ſo to Louiſa of Savoy, under whoſe protection he roſe.—Pertinacious in his ſchemes or determinations, and blinded by his opinion of himſelf, he never yielded to the advice of others, however diſintereſted or judicious: yet ſubſervient to the purpoſes of greatneſs, and miniſtering with addreſs to his ſovereign's paſſion for pleaſures and diſſipation, he acquired, and retained an almoſt unlimited influence over him. — Being ſent into Navarre at the head of a conſiderable body of forces, he beſieged and took Fontarabia. True policy would have dictated the demolition of the for-

chancellor du Prat founded their infamous and unjuſt pretenſions. She died in childbed about eight years after her marriage, leaving no iſſue.

tifications;

tifications; but Bonnivet, proud of his conqueſt, and deſirous of perpetuating its renown, would not hearken to the duke of Guiſe's remonſtrances on that head. The place was garriſoned, and ſoon after retaken by the Spaniards.

But in Italy, where the emperor and Leo had openly declared hoſtilities, the grand operations of war drew Francis's chief attention. He had committed the government of the Milaneſe to Odet de Foix, viſcount of Lautrec, and brother to his celebrated miſtreſs, madame de Chateau-Briant*. This nobleman, to whom ſo important a charge was confided, had ſcarce any thing to juſtify the choice, except his ſiſter's favour. He ſurpaſſed even Bonnivet in haughtineſs, and had already diſguſted the great feudatory lords of the duchy, by his inſupportable demeanour.

At the time when the papal and imperial armies entered the Milaneſe, Lautrec was in France, having left his brother Leſcun to ſupply his place. The king, anxious for the preſervation of his Italian dominions, would have

* We know very little with certainty relative to this lady, or the manner of her firſt becoming connected with the king. Her name was Françoiſe de Foix. She was married to the ſeigneur de Laval in Bretagne. Her influence appears to have laſted till the king's campaign into Italy, which was followed by the battle of Pavia. Mademoiſelle de Heilly ſucceeded to her place on Francis's return. Her death has been the ſubject of much inquiry and romance. It is pretended, probably without reaſon, that her veins were opened, by her huſband's command.

inſtantly

inſtantly ſent him thither; but he, conſcious of the diſorder which Francis's profuſion, and his mother's unſatisfied rapacity, had introduced into the finances, abſolutely refuſed to go, till the neceſſary ſums for the payment of his troops were provided: nor was it before he had received the moſt ſolemn and reiterated aſſurances from Louiſa, and thoſe who ſuperintended the public treaſures, that the money ſhould follow him, that he began his journey. On his arrival, the enemy retired before him in confuſion; but by a neglect of thoſe advantages which their ſituation and mutinous ſpirit, ready to revolt, repeatedly offered him, he was reduced in turn to retreat, after having loſt the city and caſtle of Milan, beſides Parma, Placenzia, and ſeveral inferior places. The joy which Leo the tenth felt at this proſperous intelligence, produced an agitation of ſpirits ſo violent, that it was followed by a fever, of which he died the fifth day.

This event, ſo unexpected, and ſo injurious to the emperor's affairs, ought to have reſtored thoſe of Francis: but the very evil which Lautrec had dreaded, and even in ſome degree predicted, ruined theſe flattering appearances. The counteſs d'Angouleſme, by a procedure the moſt pernicious to her ſon, the moſt derogatory to her own honour, and the intereſts of the ſtate, had diverted the funds deſtined to maintain the troops in Italy to her own uſe. The preciſe motive which induced her

her to this violation of the promiſes ſhe had made, is ſomewhat ambiguous and doubtful. Hatred to the counteſs de Chateau-Briant and her brother, is the moſt probable, and commonly aſſigned. The money, amounting to three hundred thouſand ecus, had been depoſited with Semblançai; but madame d'Angouleſme demanded them with ſuch earneſtneſs, and threatened the ſuperintendant with ſo ſevere a vengeance in caſe of refuſal, that, overcome by the menaces ſhe uſed, and repoſing on her aſſurances of protection in caſe of the king's diſpleaſure, he yielded. The total loſs of the Milaneſe was the reſult of this iniquitous and inexcuſable abuſe of her authority. Lautrec, unaſſiſted with the ſums which had been promiſed him, could ſcarcely maintain himſelf in the duchy: whilſt Franciſco Sforza, received into Milan, and ſupported by Colonna and his ſubjects, ſtrengthened himſelf in his new acquiſitions.—Leſcun, whom his brother had diſpatched into France with the account of his diſtreſs, arrived at length, but arrived too late. That favourable occaſion which preſents itſelf in the affairs of war, was paſt.

Repeated and unſucceſsful efforts deſtroyed the army of Lautrec. After having been compelled by the ſeditious murmurs of his Swiſs auxiliaries, to give battle where a defeat was inevitable, and having vainly beſieged Pavia, he

he ſunk beneath the torrent of adverſe fortune. Every reſource being exhauſted, and winter haſtening on, he quitted his government, and returned into France, only attended by two domeſtics. Leſcun was immediately inveſted in Cremona, and neceſſitated to capitulate: all the other places received the Imperialiſts, and even Genoa revolting, expelled the French.

When Lautrec arrived at court, Francis refuſed to admit him to his preſence, or hear his juſtification: but having, by means of the conſtable, obtained the occaſion of ſpeaking to his majeſty, he accuſed the ſuperintendants of the finances, with having occaſioned all the diſaſters of the campaign, by withholding the ſupplies. Semblençai, terrified, and incapable of other defence, threw the blame upon the king's mother: but Louiſa, adding the baſeſt inhumanity to her other faults, found means to exculpate herſelf, and to perſuade her ſon, that only Semblençai was criminal. Judges were appointed to examine into this dark affair. The chancellor du Prat was among the number. This man, without integrity, ſwayed by no principle of juſtice or honour, was devoted to the counteſs's intereſts or paſſions, and procured Semblençai's condemnation. The good old man, who had grown grey under four princes, and whom Francis uſed to honour with the endearing and reſpectful appellation of his father, was led out to puniſhment, and

ignominiouſly

ignominiouſly executed.—Lautrec, diſgraced, was ordered to his government of Guenne *.

Notwithſtanding his paſt misfortunes, and in defiance of almoſt all the great powers of

* The moſt candid and impartial ſurvey muſt acquit Lautrec of blame, or any imputation reſpecting the loſs of the Milaneze. He remained with his troops till they became ſo mutinous and diſcontented, that he was in imminent danger of being ſeized by them, as a pledge for the payment of their arrears; and was obliged to paſs diſguiſed through Switzerland, in his return to France. The conſtable of Bourbon, not without great difficulty, procured him at length an audience of the king in council, by declaring to his majeſty, that he could fully juſtify himſelf; and would unfold ſome extraordinary ſecrets, with which it imported him deeply to be made acquainted.

Lautrec, when introduced into the royal preſence, preſerved undiminiſhed his native haughtineſs of deportment; and even preſumed to complain highly to his maſter, of the ungracious reception he gave him. Francis was covered with aſtoniſhment at the recital made him. He ordered Semblençai to be inſtantly ſent for; but in the interval which elapſed between this order and his appearance, he yet reproached Lautrec with incapacity and precipitancy in abandoning the Milaneze, notwithſtanding the diſappointment in his remittances; and added inſultingly that Colonna and Peſcara, the imperial commanders, had been no better ſupplied, or punctually ſuccoured. To theſe charges Lautrec modeſtly replied; and was engaged in his exculpation, when Semblençai arrived. The king regarded him with a look of furious indignation at his entrance, and demanded if the facts alledged againſt him were true. On the accuſal of his mother as the origin of all theſe evils, his amazement and fury were heightened.—Louiſa was ſummoned, and appeared. Semblençai repeated before her his juſtification.—The counteſs, unawed either by her own conſciouſneſs of its veracity, or by the preſence of the king, gave a looſe to the moſt unbounded reſentment againſt the unfortunate treaſurer, and ſcrupled not to accuſe him of a lie, and to demand vengeance as of a traitor, who had aſperſed her honour. —Semblençai's ruin and execution were the conſequence of this iniquitous and foul tranſaction.

Europe

Europe combined againſt him, the king perſiſted in his reſolution to recover the Milaneſe. He ſent his favourite Bonnivet, lately created admiral, over the mountains, and had intended to command the army in perſon deſtined to this enterprize; when a conſpiracy the moſt alarming and important checked his deſigns, and compelled him to watch over the tranquillity of his kingdom. I mean the conſtable's defection and revolt.

If ever treaſon was palliated by the circumſtances which attended or produced it — if a crime ſo ſtigmatized and degrading, admits of apology or defence, it muſt be in the perſon of Charles of Bourbon. This nobleman, whom his birth, his qualities, his power and offices under the crown, ought to have raiſed above the perſecution of any individual, had been marked out by the counteſs d'Angouleſme's unrelenting and inceſſant deſire of vengeance. It is ſaid, that the contempt with which he had refuſed her hand and perſon, which ſhe offered him, ſuperadded to the unconcealed ſentiments of deteſtation which he avowed for her character, had inflamed her to a pitch of reſentment, which could only be ſatiated by his ruin. Bonnivet, thirſting for the ſword of conſtable, and hoping to obtain it by his diſgrace, joined the counteſs; and du Prat, the moſt corrupt and vicious miniſter to whom the ſeals were ever confided, lent his aid to complete the ſcheme.

Not

Not content to have prevented his marriage with the princeſs Renée, youngeſt daughter to Louis the twelfth, and ſiſter to the queen; Louiſa determined to ſtrike at the root of his greatneſs, by laying claim to the vaſt poſſeſſions which he had inherited in right of his wife Suſanna of Bourbon, daughter to the famous lady of Beaujeu, regent under Charles the eighth. She ſucceeded, though in contradiction to apparent equity, and by a perverſion of every ſacred or binding inſtitution.

The unhappy conſtable, oppreſſed by unmerited ſeverity, and driven to deſpair by a ſeries of unparalleled inſults, ſacrificed his loyalty to his deſire of revenge; and entered into a treaty with the emperor. Charles, who knew his value, and the important conſequences which might enſue from ſuch a chieftain gained, accorded, and exceeded all his demands *.

Francis

* Adrian de Croy, count de Rieux, and firſt gentleman of the bedchamber, was the perſon employed by the emperor to carry on the negociation with Bourbon. He paſſed through France diſguiſed as a peaſant, and arrived by night at Chantelle, the conſtable's ſeat in Auvergne, where he lay in an adjoining apartment to him, and ſettled the terms previous to his revolt. Charles, not ſatisfied with the powers granted to the count de Rieux, and deſirous of entering into more exact conditions with the emperor, diſpatched La Mothe de Noyers, a gentleman in his ſervice, into Spain. He returned, bringing with him the moſt ample and general ratification of his demands. Bourbon buried the papers in a box under ground, at the foot of a tree; and began to aſſemble his partizans and vaſſals, in the pretence of accompanying the king into Italy.

Matignon

Francis received advice of this dangerous conſpiracy as he was on his route to Lyons, in the intent of croſſing the Alps; and he inſtantly took the reſolution of coming to an explanation with the conſtable in perſon. He went to him at Moulins, and informed him candidly of the imputation laid to his charge. Bourbon denied his having accepted the emperor's offers, though he confeſſed overtures had been made to ſhake his allegiance. As this confeſſion was ſufficient to juſtify his ſeizure, it was either owing to the king's generoſity, and conſciouſneſs how unworthily he had been treated; or to his incapacity of arreſting ſo powerful a lord, environed by vaſſals who adored him; that he was not committed to cuſtody. Francis only commanded him to follow him to Lyons. Bourbon affected to obey; and being ſomewhat indiſpoſed, began his journey in a litter. While he was on the way, intelligence was brought him, that

Matignon and d'Argouges, two gentlemen of that number, who were privy to their lord's conſpiracy, having confeſſed at Eaſter to a prieſt, and enumerated, among other their tranſgreſſions, a plot againſt the ſtate in which they were engaged; he commanded them inſtantly to avow it to their ſovereign, and ſet out immediately himſelf to impart this intereſting intelligence to Brezé, ſenechal of Normandy. The gentlemen believing themſelves loſt, and conſcious that their confeſſion could alone preſerve their lives, mounted on horſeback; and meeting Francis at St. Pierre-le-Moutier in the Bourbonnois, threw themſelves at his feet, and made an ingenuous diſcloſure of the whole tranſaction.

the parliament in purſuance of the ſentence paſſed againſt him, had ordered all his lands to be ſequeſtered. Wounded anew by this information, he yet attempted to ward the blow; and hoping from Francis's generous magnanimity what Louiſa refuſed, he diſpatched the biſhop of Autun, to implore that this decree might at leaſt be ſuſpended; and aſſuring the king that ſuch an act of grace and tenderneſs would bind him for ever to his ſervice. Had his requeſt been granted, there is the higheſt reaſon to ſuppoſe, it would have retained him in his duty; but by the inveterate animoſity of his enemies, who had reſolved his deſtruction, the biſhop was arreſted at only two leagues diſtance *.

Loſing

* The minuteſt circumſtances reſpecting the flight of ſo great a man become intereſting.—When the biſhop of Autun was ſeized by the marechal de Chabannes, a footman galloped in all haſte to give the conſtable information of it. He was then at Chantelle. The inſtant he received this news, he ſet out by night for Herman, a town of Auvergne, where Henry Arnauld, a gentleman attached to him, was governor. He arrived during the darkneſs, and awoke Pomperant and Montagnac-Tenzane immediately.—The former of theſe owed his life to him; for having killed Chiſay, a celebrated gallant of the court, Bourbon ſheltered him, and afterwards procured his pardon.---Tenzane, aged near eighty years at this time, remained inviolably attached to him in his misfortunes, though he had ever oppoſed and been averſe to his treaty with the emperor. It was requiſite that one ſhould accompany him, while the other favoured his flight. As the latter employment was by far the moſt hazardous, it became a ſubject of conteſt, both deſiring ardently this deſperate commiſſion. Chance alone decided it in favour of Tenzane. He executed it with the moſt conſummate

Loſing all expectation of ſoothing Francis's anger, after ſo manifeſt a declaration of it, he returned to his caſtle of Chantelle; and hearing that four thouſand men were on their march to inveſt him in it, he quitted it by night with torches. After having walked ſome way, he contrived to deceive his attendants, and withdrew from them unobſerved. They, attached to their lord in his misfortunes, would not abandon him; and continued to follow Francis de Montagnac-Tenzane, who had taken his horſe and habit, in the apprehenſion that it was the conſtable. Daybreak ſhewed them their miſtake; and Tenzane, addreſſing them with tears, informed them, that their maſter had taken another road; that he thanked them for their unſhaken fidelity and affection; and beſought them to repair to their own houſes till farther order.—Meanwhile Bourbon continued his flight. Only one gentleman accompanied him, named Pomperant. He ſoon gained the Franche Comté, and from thence paſſing through Trent to Mantua, arrived ſafe at Genoa. No revolt or rebellion ſucceeded; nor did the king make any minute reſearches into the accomplices or abettors of the conſtable's intrigues. Shame and generoſity pleading in

conſummate addreſs, and afterwards rejoined his maſter in Italy.---The conſtable and Pomperant croſſed all the county of Burgundy, having only made uſe of one precaution, that of ſhoeing their horſes backwards.

his boſom for his injured ſubject, probably prevented him.

Amid theſe convulſions of the ſtate, died Cloude queen of France. Hiſtorians, loſt among the crowd of battles and public tranſactions which diverſify this reign, have ſcarce deigned to mark her death. She was called, "The "good Queen," from her many amiable qualities and virtues; but her perſon correſponded not to the beauty of her mind. She was ſomewhat lame like her mother, Anne of Bretagne; and in other reſpects little calculated to retain the affections of a huſband, gallant, inconſtant, and fond of pleaſure. She neither interfered in affairs of policy, or poſſeſſed any aſcendancy over the king. Madame d'Angouleſme retained the whole authority. Her end was accelerated, if not abſolutely produced, by a diſeaſe which Francis communicated to her, and which was the reſult of his irregular and promiſcuous intercourſe with women. She expired at the caſtle of Blois, only twenty-four years old, and after having borne ſeven children *.

Though the dread of ſome inteſtine commo-

* Anne of Bretagne predicted her daughter's fortune, if married to the count d'Angouleſme; but Louis the twelfth, with that goodneſs ſo uniformly viſible in his character, replied to her remonſtrances, "Vous vous trompez; elle n'eſt pas "belle, mais ſa vertu touchera le Comte, et il ne pourra s'em-"pecher de lui rendre juſtice."---Francis hardly juſtified this favourable opinion of him. Brantome does not ſcruple to ſay, in terms the moſt expreſs, that he gave her a venereal diſtemper of the worſt kind, which terminated in her death.

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tion prevented the king from entering Italy in perſon at this time, yet Bonnivet continued his march, and reached the Milaneſe, unoppoſed. Had he purſued the advantages which his unexpected appearance, and the diſorder among the imperial troops, afforded him, the whole duchy might have been regained to France: but he neglected them, till the approach of winter, and the plague, which made a rapid progreſs among his ſoldiery, neceſſitated him to retire. Bourbon, to whom Charles had confided the ſupreme command of his armies, in conjunction with Lannoy, viceroy of Naples, and the marquis of Peſcara, followed the admiral with that impetuous and eager haſte, which the wiſh of vengeance on his declared and mortal enemy lent him. Bonnivet, wounded in the arm, and dreading more than death to fall into the conſtable's hands, left Bayard, ſo renowned in the annals of chivalry, to cover the retreat of his forces; and putting himſelf into a litter, arrived ſafe at Lyons. Bayard executed the charge committed to him with that noble intrepidity which has immortalized his name, but fell in the execution of it; and after his death, the French having totally evacuated Italy, every place in the Milaneſe returned to the emperor.

Theſe ſucceſſes emboldened Bourbon to enter Provence. His own intentions were to have puſhed on without delay into the interior provinces of the kingdom, where he expected to

have been joined by all his vaſſals; but Charles's generals, attentive only to their maſter's intereſts, compelled him to adopt other counſels, and laid ſiege to Marſeilles. It was gallantly and obſtinately defended; and after a blockade of ſix weeks, the Imperial commanders, alarmed at Francis's approach with a conſiderable army, diſlodged in confuſion; and reembarking the greater part of their artillery, retreated with expedition acroſs the mountains.

The king, naturally ſanguine, and eaſily elated by the favours of fortune, determined to follow the conſtable by great marches. Bonnivet urged him to this raſh project, and repreſented the condition of the Milaneſe defenceleſs and unprotected; the precipitate retreat of the Imperialiſts, dejected and diſmayed. Superadded to theſe public motives, it is ſaid a private one, not inconſiſtent with Francis's character—his deſire to viſit a beautiful lady of Milan, whom the admiral had depictured to him in colours the moſt animating and flattering, ſtill farther induced him to it *. His old-

* This ſtory is not ſo improbable, or ill founded, as at firſt we may be inclined to ſuppoſe. Brantome, who was well acquainted with the intrigues of Francis's court, declares this in the moſt poſitive manner, as a ſecret known to few, He ſays, that her name was, "La Signora Clerice," a noble lady of Milan, and eſteeemed one of the fineſt women in Italy; that Bonnivet had obtained from her the laſt favours ſome years before, and inflamed the king with the ſame deſire. The more we conſider the characters of the admiral and his prince, the more are we inclined to credit this narration.

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eſt and wiſeſt generals oppoſed the ſtrongeſt reaſons to diſſuade him. They repreſented the ſtate of his kingdom left open to the invaſions of Charles and Henry; the near approach of winter, and advanced ſeaſon. Louiſa, as if from a preſentiment of the calamities which her ſon's conduct would entail on France, uſed every method to prevent it. As ſoon as ſhe received notice of his intention to enter Italy, ſhe diſpatched three ſucceſſive couriers to ſtop his march; or, if that could not be, at leaſt to implore him to wait till ſhe had embraced, and bid him a laſt adieu. The king was deaf to her entreaties or remonſtrances; and ordered her to be informed by the laſt meſſenger, that he was too far advanced to think of ſuſpending his progreſs, but that he inveſted her with the regency during his abſence.

Francis's entry into the Milaneſe ſpread equal or greater terror, than Bonnivet's and Lautrec's had done in former campaigns. Bourbon, purſued in turn by his adverſary, and flying before thoſe whom he had ſo lately driven, ſcarce could avoid being overtaken. The French followed ſo cloſe upon his ſteps, that their troops even entered one of the gates of Milan, only half an hour after he had eſcaped by another; and had the king perſiſted not to allow them time for recovery, from the conſternation into which he had thrown them, no exertion of military ſkill in Charles's commanders could have prevented their defeat, or mutiny and ſepara-

tion. Unhappily, the admiral's advice, and aſcendancy over his maſter, prevented him from embracing this ſalutary conduct; and prevailed on him, in oppoſition to the univerſal voice of his captains, to undertake the ſiege of Pavia.—The ſequel is ſo well known to all Europe, that it is a needleſs taſk to recite it. The fatal day when Francis became the emperor's priſoner, has been related by ſo many hiſtorians, and with ſuch a minute enumeration of the facts which accompanied and followed it, that I ſhall not enter on the narration. Some circumſtances rather relating to the Individual than the Monarch, and which Hiſtory has conſidered as beneath its dignity to recount, I ſhall mention.

The king gave in that celebrated engagement the moſt diſtinguiſhed proofs of courage and proweſs; nor was it to any want of military virtue, that his misforunes are to be imputed. The number and the quality of thoſe whom he killed with his own hand, are inconteſtable evidences of this aſſertion. His armour rendered him diſtinguiſhed in the field, by its richneſs and ſplendour; whereas Bourbon, more cautious and circumſpect, combated in the habit of a private cavalier, having given Pomperant his troop to lead. Thrown from his horſe, wounded, ſpent with fatigue, and almoſt deſerted by his followers, Francis continued to defend himſelf with a valour the moſt obſtinate. Two

Spaniſh

Spaniſh gentlemen, Diego d'Avila, and Juan d'Orbieta, put their ſwords to his throat. In this exigency, a follower of Bourbon's, named La Mothe de Noyers, came up, and knowing the king, though his face was covered with blood, called out to him to ſurrender to the conſtable, who was not far off: but diſdaining to deliver up his ſword to a man whom he regarded as a traitor, he refuſed, and demanded Lannoy. While La Mothe ran every where in hope to diſcover his lord, the viceroy of Naples arrived at the ſpot, and received Francis's ſubmiſſions. This was a peculiar good fortune, as Bourbon would certainly have taken him by force from any perſon of inferior authority or diſtinction.

Diego d'Avila firſt pulled off his gauntlets, and the ſurrounding crowd deſpoiled him of his coat of mail, his belt, and ſpurs.—Meanwhile the marquis del Guaſto approached the king, and ſaluted him with great reſpect; and, as he requeſted with peculiar earneſtneſs, that he might not be led into the city of Pavia for a mockery to the inhabitants, the marquis conducted him to his own tent. The wounds he had received in the action were inſpected, and carefully dreſſed. One was near the eyebrow, another in the arm, and a third in his right hand. Beſides theſe, he had received ſeveral balls from a harquebuſſe in his cuiraſs. The marquis del Guaſto had the honour to ſup with him; and Bourbon preſented the napkin to his majeſty. The Spaniſh hiſtorians declare that

he received it very graciouſly, and even permitted the conſtable to kiſs his hand on the knee; but the French writers aſſert the contrary, and ſay he turned his back on him with contempt, and would not take the napkin from him. During his repaſt, the diſcourſe naturally turned on the paſt action; and Francis, with infinite modeſty, propriety, and eloquence, pointed out the cauſes which conduced to its loſs, and chiefly blamed the cowardice of the Switzers and Italians in his army. When he retired to reſt, none of his valets being near to aid him to undreſs, a certain ſieur de Montpezat, who had been made priſoner by a Spaniſh ſoldier, preſented himſelf for that purpoſe; and the king, pleaſed with his humble aſſiduity and attention, redeemed, and elevated him to the dignity of a marechal of France.

Many renowned commanders periſhed on that day: Leſcun and Bonnivet were among the chief. The latter expiated, in ſome meaſure, his fatal advice, by the gallantry and courage with which he devoted himſelf to death. Seeing the fortune of the battle waver, and the troops diſpoſed to fly, he attempted to rally the Switzers, and ſome cavalry: but not being able to ſucceed, and no hope remaining of victory, he raiſed the vizor of his helmet, that he might be univerſally known; and ruſhing into the thickeſt ranks of the enemy, oppoſed his breaſt to their ſwords, and fell, covered with

with honourable wounds. Bourbon had given expreſs orders to take him alive if poſſible; and in caſe that was not poſſible, to kill him; in no caſe to let him eſcape. After the engagement his body was found; and the conſtable ſtanding over it, and having conſidered it long in ſilence, only exclaimed, "Ah! malheureux! "Tu es cauſe de la ruine de la France, et de "la mienne!" The duke of Alençon, who had been married to the celebrated Margaret of Valois, ſiſter of Francis, behaved unworthy his rank as prince of the blood. He fled among the firſt, and retired to Lyons with a number of the nobility, where he died in a few days of grief and ſhame. The king of Navarre, Henry d'Albret, remained a priſoner.

Lannoy was meanwhile in the utmoſt anxiety how to diſpoſe of his royal captive. The day after the action, he conducted him to the caſtle of Pizzhigitone, where he remained two months under the care of Don Fernand Alarçon. No poſitive orders arriving from the emperor's council in Spain, for his removal to another fortreſs, the viceroy of Naples became more apprehenſive of ſome accident, which might procure or terminate in his enlargement. The Imperial troops, who had ſcarcely received any pay, were diſpoſed to mutiny, and might eaſily ſeize on his perſon to enſure their arrears. To carry him to the caſtle of Naples, where he might have been ſecurely detained, was a much more

more eligible plan; but they dreaded leſt the pope or the Venetians might attempt to reſcue him on the road. It was ſtill more hazardous to transfer him into Spain by ſea, becauſe the gallies of Andrea Doria, and of France, were ſtationed to intercept his paſſage.—Lannoy's addreſs extricated him from theſe numerous difficulties. He found means to engage the king to embrace thoſe meaſures, of his own accord, which otherwiſe it would have been impoſſible to execute; and perſuaded him that a perſonal interview with Charles, was the ſpeedieſt method of adjuſting ſo weighty an affair, and reſtoring him to freedom. Francis, who, generous himſelf, ſuppoſed others to have hearts equally magnanimous and enlarged, eagerly caught at the inſidious propoſal, and fell into the ſnare. To ſuch a pitch of punctilious honour did he carry his ſentiments, that he even oppoſed himſelf to a ſedition among the Imperial ſoldiery, of which he might have profited; and not only commanded Doria to make no attempt on the Spaniſh veſſels which conducted him from Italy, but cauſed the regent to lend ſix gallies to Lannoy. About the middle of June they ſet ſail from Portofiero, and arrived happily at Alicant. The king was brought under a ſtrong guard to Madrid, and lodged in the caſtle*.

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* I muſt own myſelf more indebted to Brantome than to any other author, for the moſt of the particulars I have enumerated,

The conſternation and public affright which Francis's defeat and captivity ſpread throughout the whole kingdom, is equalled by nothing in the French annals, except the capture of John at the battle of Poitiers. Louiſa, his mother, exclaimed at the ſad news, in the recollection of her reiterated, but ineffectual efforts to ſtop his march over the mountains, "Helas! il ne "m'a voulu croire; ha! que je lui avois tant "dit!"—Though oppreſſed by every feeling of parental woe; though originally the author of theſe calamities, by her malevolent and unjuſt perſecution of Bourbon; though unpopular, and holding the regency, in this convulſion of the ſtate, by a tenure the moſt precarious; ſhe nevertheleſs ſuſtained her courage. She did more, and even effaced, in a great meaſure, her paſt offences, by the wiſdom, vigour, and uniformity of her conduct. Henry the eighth of England, the Venetian republic, and the reigning pontiff, Clement the ſeventh, were all induced to quit the emperor's party by her ſolicitations. She negotiated in every court, and moved all the ſprings which can actuate ſtateſmen or politicians, to effect her ſon's releaſe.

merated, relative to the battle of Pavia. The memoirs of Du Bellay, and thoſe of De Thou, contain many curious remarks. "Les anecdotes des reines et regentes de France," together with Mezeray, furniſh likewiſe matter of entertainment and information.

During

During theſe endeavours of the regent, Francis had time to diſcover and repent the error, into which his romantic generoſity and honour had led him. Inſtead of the interview with which he had been flattered; inſtead of treating with his conqueror, as from gentleman to gentleman; inſtead of that courteous and noble reception which he had expected, and which every part of his own behaviour intitled him to receive; he found a ſolitary priſon, guards inexorable and vigilant, a confinement unuſually ſevere and ſtrict.—Charles did not deign to ſee him in this rigorous captivity; and the only recreation permitted him, was to take the air on a mule, ſurrounded with ſoldiers. This unworthy and unkingly uſage, continued for ſix months, produced a fever, the effect of diſappointment and vexation. The arrival of the ducheſs of Alençon, his beloved ſiſter, to whom the emperor had granted permiſſion to viſit him in his diſtreſsful ſituation, conduced principally to his recovery: and Charles himſelf, aſhamed of his cruel inſenſibility, and terrified leſt his priſoner's death might rob him of the vaſt advantages he doubted not to derive from his releaſe, condeſcended to make him a ſhort, but conſolatory viſit; in which he affected the utmoſt commiſeration, and gave him proſpects of ſpeedy freedom. Theſe fallacious expectations vaniſhed with the king's return of health; and, in the deſpair of regaining his liberty, except on conditions ſo humiliating

ating and ignominious as to preclude any acceptance of them, he intruſted to his ſiſter, on her return, a deed, by which he reſigned his kingdom to the dauphin Francis, his eldeſt ſon. Margaret carried this act of reſignation into France.

Charles, touched at length, not by motives of generoſity or greatneſs of ſoul, but by apprehenſions of intereſt and narrow policy;—viewing the ſtate of the Milaneſe, left defenceleſs by the marquis de Peſcara's death, and a great league formed for the releaſe of Francis—entered into a treaty with him. Even then he did not relax the rigour of his demands; though Gattinara, his chancellor, predicted their certain violation, and refuſed, with unſubmitting firmneſs, to affix to them the ſeals. —The marriage of the emperor's ſiſter, Eleanor of Portugal, with the king, formed the cement of this famous treaty: but the reſtitution of Burgundy was an article ſo injurious to the ſtate, ſo ruinous and fatal in its nature, that the king proteſted againſt it in private, previous to his departure from Madrid.

After a captivity of near thirteen months from the battle of Pavia, he was reconducted by his two keepers, Lannoy and Alarçon, to the bank of the river Bidaſſoa, near Fontarabia: while Lautrec brought the two young ſons of France, the dauphin and his brother Henry, who were to be delivered up as hoſtages for their father, to the oppoſite ſide. The exchange was

was made, and Francis once more entered his kingdom.—At Bayonne he found Louiſa and Margaret, who attended his arrival. The interview between them was touching and lively, in the higheſt degree. The counteſs d'Angouleſme, who knew the conſtitution of her ſon, and his diſpoſition to gallantry, had prepared for him fetters of a ſofter nature than thoſe he had experienced at Madrid. She preſented to him the celebrated Mademoiſelle de Heilly, better known under the title of ducheſs of Eſtampes. Her age at this time did not exceed eighteen years. A beauty of perſon the moſt delicate and perfect, ſuperadded to wit, and an underſtanding improved by all the cultivation of the age, enſured her conqueſt over the king. He became paſſionately attached to her; and their connection laſted in its full force during the remainder of his life.

Here let us pauſe a moment! The re-entry of Francis into his dominions forms a new epocha in his reign.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Treaty of Madrid violated. — War renewed between Francis and the emperor. — Unſucceſsful attack of Naples. — Death of Lautrec. — Peace of Cambray. — Marriage of Francis to Eleanor of Portugal. — Magnificence of the king. — Death of his mother Louiſa. — Interview of Marſeilles. — Marriage of the duke of Orleans to Catherine of Medicis. — War renewed. — The emperor enters Provence. — Death of Francis the dauphin. — Circumſtances of it — His character. — Reflections. — The emperor retreats into Italy. — Marriage of James the fifth, to the princeſs Magdalen. — Character of Anne de Montmorenci. — Interviews of Nice and Aigues-Mortes. — Story of the cave in Dauphiné. — Francis's amours. — Indiſpoſition, and conſequent change. — Viſit of the emperor. — Alteration of the miniſters. — Third war. — Deſcription of the court. — Battle of Cerizoles. — The emperor enters Picardy. — Intrigues of the ducheſs of Eſtampes. — Peace concluded. — Death of the duke of Orleans. — Circumſtances. — Character. — Death of the count d'Enguien. — Parties formed in the court. — Francis's illneſs. — Circumſtances. — Dying admonitions to the Dauphin. — Death. — Character.

FRANCIS

FRANCIS the firſt was ſtill in the prime of life when his impriſonment terminated, and he ſaw himſelf again reſtored to his throne and people. His misfortunes, and conſequent captivity, though they had not made ſo deep an impreſſion on him, as to alter eſſentially his character, yet rendered him more circumſpect and cautious in his conduct. The raſh and impetuous valour which had diſtinguiſhed him hitherto, was calmed, and attempered into a ſerener courage: and policy, or intereſts of ſtate, compelled him to adopt meaſures leſs diſintereſted, and better adapted to the temper of the emperor, his antagoniſt.—But theſe were only partial changes: his magnificence, ever accompanied with profuſion; his unreſtrained attachment and liberality to favourites; his paſſion for women, and all the luxurious diſſipations of a court; theſe errors yet characteriſed him in the moſt extended degree: and, by introducing confuſion into his finances, and a diſorder through every department of government, gave Charles a ſuperiority in the affairs of war, and involved his kingdom in numberleſs evils.

So oppreſſive and ſevere were the conditions of the treaty of Madrid, that the king, conſcious his infringement of them would be approved and defended through all Europe, no ſooner recovered

recovered his freedom, than he declared to Lannoy, who had accompanied him to demand their execution; that Burgundy, being a part, not of the royal domain, but of the kingdom, could not be alienated or diſmembered by any exertion of the regal authority. He diſpenſed himſelf from his oaths, as compulſory, and the effect of neceſſity; and, having tendered other ceſſions and offers for the releaſe of his children, and for a final peace, prepared himſelf to exert new military efforts to compel the emperor to the acceptance of them. In this deſign, a great league was concluded at the caſtle of Cognac in Angoumois, whither he had retired, during the ſummer, to enjoy the pleaſures of the chace. The powers confederated were Francis, the pope, Sforza, the Venetians, and Florentines.

Had their combined forces attacked the Milaneſe, deſtitute either of troops or commanders, without delay, it muſt have been inevitably re-conquered: but a negligence and inattention to theſe manifeſt advantages, equally extraordinary and blameable, gave Bourbon time to arrive, and Lannoy to provide for the ſafety of Naples. The former, to whom Charles had promiſed the inveſtiture of the duchy; after having forced Sforza to ſurrender the caſtle of Milan, and having exhauſted every art to ſatisfy the murmurs of his ſoldiery, diſcontented from the want of pay, took the daring

daring and deſperate reſolution of marching to Rome. He executed it; and, though killed on the attack by a muſket ſhot, under the walls, his victorious army entered, and pillaged that celebrated city. Clement, who had retired to the Caſtle of St. Angelo, was neceſſitated to capitulate from famine, and remained a priſoner in the emperor's hands.

An outrage ſo violent, and even deemed ſacrilegious, as that of Charles on the common father of Chriſtendom, produced a new league between Henry the eighth and Francis. Jealouſy and terror cemented this alliance. Lautrec, who had long languiſhed under the diſpleaſure of his prince, was recalled, and placed at the head of the army deſtined againſt Italy. Grown diſtruſtful by his paſt misfortunes, and foreſeeing, in the character of the king, freſh ſources of future diſaſter and defeat, he would have declined the honour tendered him: but being obliged to ſubmit to the royal mandate, he prepared to paſs the mountains.

The two kings ſent their heralds to defy the emperor; who returned theſe inſults by reproaches and invectives againſt Francis, whom he branded with epithets the moſt opprobrious, and challenged to ſingle combat. In the impotence of his reſentment, he even violated the ſacred duties of humanity and clemency, by revenging in ſome degree the errors of the father

father on his blameleſs children. He not only rendered the confinement of the young dauphin and the duke of Orleans unuſually ſtrict; but ſhut them up in apartments darkened, and did not permit them any ſort of diverſion or amuſement. His viſits and notice of them were ſhort, cold, and unfrequent; and, by a barbarity unworthy his character, he deprived them of their moſt faithful and beloved domeſtics, whom he ſent to work, chained in his gallies.

Meanwhile Lautrec again entered the Milaneſe, ſo often conquered, and ſo often loſt. With the fortune conſtantly attendant on the French arms at their firſt arrival, he rapidly reduced it to ſubjection. On the news of his approach, the Imperial generals releaſed the ſovereign pontiff, and haſtily evacuated Rome. Lautrec purſued them by great marches; and, preſenting battle to their troops, enervated by plunder, and thinned by peſtilential diſeaſes, the effects of their intemperance and licentiouſneſs, drove them before him in confuſion. Naples afforded them an aſylum. It is ſaid, that, had he improved their panic, and laid inſtant ſiege to the place, he might have hoped every thing from their general diſorder and diſmay: but he loſt that favourable juncture, in the attack of ſeveral inferior towns, and at length ſat down before it.

By that unhappy fatality which ſeemed to accompany

accompany the enterprizes of Francis beyond the Alps, but which was really the neceſſary conſequence of his own negligent remiſſneſs, and deſultory reſolutions, or unequal meaſures, all theſe promiſing appearances were overclouded, and rendered finally abortive. Lautrec, anxious for his own and his ſovereign's glory; and though defective as a commander, animated with the warmeſt enthuſiaſm for his country, exerted all his endeavours to avert the deſtruction which he had early predicted.—He implored the king to ſatisfy, and conciliate the celebrated Doria, whoſe concurrence and aid to block up the port of Naples, was indiſpenſably requiſite to the capture of the city. It was debated in the cabinet council to comply with this advice: but Du Prat and Montmorenci having ſtrongly oppoſed it, from ſome little motives of private intereſt and emolument, this wholeſome and ſalutary counſel was rejected. The ſiege was unavoidably protracted; ſummer advanced, and diſtempers began to ſpread themſelves among the French: the hopes of ſucceſs grew fainter every day, and the army, almoſt rendered incapable of action by its loſſes, ſunk into univerſal dejection. Lautrec long ſuſtained his courage unſhaken; but ſeized at length with a mortal diſeaſe, he became unable to perform the functions of a general. His officers endeavoured to induce him to retire

tire to Capua: but he had ſworn to enter Naples victorious, or die; and, ſinking under the preſſure rather of intellectual diſquietude and pain, than bodily infirmity, he expired in the camp. With him the poor remains of vigour and firmneſs, which yet animated his troops, became extinct. The marquis de Saluzzo, on whom the ſupreme command devolved, capitulated ſoon after, and died in impriſonment. All Naples was evacuated by the French; and theſe vaſt preparations, like ſo many which had preceded them, produced no advantage to the kingdom.

Tired with war, and exhauſted by ſuch continual efforts, the various princes of Europe ſuſpended, from common weakneſs, their mutual hoſtilities. This voluntary truce was followed by a final pacification. Margaret of Burgundy *, aunt to the emperor, and Louiſa, mother of Francis, were the mediators

* She was a princeſs of infinite wit and capacity. Her affiance to Charles the eighth having been diſſolved from political motives, Margaret was ſent back into the Low Countries. She was afterwards demanded by Ferdinand and Iſabella, for their only ſon Don Juan. On her voyage from Flanders into Spain, a violent ſtorm attacked them near the coaſt of England. The veſſel was expected to ſink. Amid ſuch a ſcene of terror and confuſion, ſhe had the calmneſs and preſence of mind, to tie all her jewels round her arm in a waxed cloth; annexing theſe two humorous lines of poetry, deſcriptive of her peculiar fortune.

"Cy git Margot, la gente Demoiſelle,
"Qu'eut deux Maris, et ſi mourut Pucelle."

of

of an accommodation ſo deſirable. It was concluded at Cambray; and the terms, though burthenſome and ſevere to France, were yet ſubmitted to, in the paſſionate wiſh to reſcue the dauphin and his brother from their captivity, which formed one of the moſt important articles.

The marechal de Montmorenci was ſent to Andaye, on the frontier of Spain, with the ranſom: while Velaſco, conſtable of Caſtile, conducted the two princes, and Eleanor, the ſiſter of Charles, to the oppoſite ſide of the river. The exchange being reciprocally made, they proceeded towards Bourdeaux. Francis advanced to meet them as far as the abby of Veien, in Gaſcony, and the nuptial ceremonies were performed there the ſame day. Eleanor was at this time thirty years of age: her perſon had very few charms; and the king, already enſlaved to his miſtreſs, the ducheſs of Eſtampes, never regarded her with affection, and conſidered the union as merely political. She received, notwithſtanding, all the external honours of royalty, and was ever treated by her huſband with great reſpect. As Montmorency began likewiſe about this time to acquire a prodigious intereſt and aſcendant over his maſter; the queen, conſcious of her little intrinſic conſequence, attached him to her, and ſupported herſelf by his influence, and credit.

During

During the interval of tranquillity and repoſe which ſucceeded to the almoſt continual wars ſince Francis's acceſſion, he mixed the patronage of letters, and munificent protection of all the liberal arts, with the ſplendor and luxury which eminently diſtinguiſhed his court. The ſimplicity of Louis the twelfth's manners was forgotten; and the introduction of ladies conſtantly about the perſon of the ſovereign, a cuſtom unknown before in Europe, breathed a ſpirit of gallantry, which the king's character and converſation were calculated to encourage. "Une cour ſans dames," ſaid he frequently, "eſt une année ſans printemps; "une printemps ſans roſes." His ſiſter Margaret, afterwards queen of Navarre, was one of the moſt accompliſhed princeſſes of whom we read in ſtory. Though the martial ſpirit of chivalry ſtill gave an air of rudeneſs and ferocity to the diverſions and entertainments exhibited; yet an elegance and refinement inſenſibly mixed itſelf with them, and began to take off the edge of this remaining barbariſm. Fontainbleau, Chambord, and St. Germain-en-Laye ſucceſſively appeared: and genius, waking at the encouragement extended to it by ſo great a monarch, exerted its firſt attempts in eulogiums to his honour.

The death of the ducheſs of Angouleſme followed ſoon after the peace, which her endeavours had contributed chiefly to produce.

Paris being ravaged by the plague, ſhe retired to Fontainbleau; but the environs being infected, obliged her to take the route of Romorantin in Berri. Sickneſs compelled her to ſtop at Grez, a little village in the Gatinois; and ſhe expired there, after a few days illneſs, at fifty-four years of age *.

Though her maſterly and unwearied efforts to procure the king's releaſe, ſeem in ſome

* Brantome relates a circumſtance of her death, ſtrongly indicative of the ſuperſtitious terrors, to which even princes were not ſuperior, in the ſixteenth century, nor was genius, however elevated, exempt from them.

Three days before ſhe expired, ſays he, being awake during the night, ſhe was ſurprized at an extraordinary brightneſs, which illuminated the chamber. Apprehending it to be the fire which her women made, ſhe reprimanded them; but they replied, that it was cauſed by the moon. The ducheſs ordered her curtains to be undrawn; and diſcovered that a comet produced this unuſual light. "Ah!" exclaimed ſhe, "this is "a phænomenon that appears not for perſons of common con- "dition! Shut the window; it is a comet which announces "my departure: I muſt prepare myſelf for it."—The enſuing morning ſhe ſent me for her confeſſor, in the certainty of her approaching diſſolution. The phyſicians aſſured her, that her apprehenſions were ill-founded and premature. "If I had not "ſeen," replied Louiſa, "the ſignal for my death, I could be- "lieve it; for I do not feel myſelf exhauſted or ſpent." She expired on the third day from this event.

It is ſaid ſhe had always extremely dreaded the termination of life, and could never ſupport the mention of mortality, even from the pulpit. Long after this period, and even late in the laſt century, all the appearances of the celeſtial bodies, not perfectly comprehended by the multitude, were ſuppoſed to indicate and foretel the deaths of ſovereigns, or changes and revolutions of empires.

meaſure

meaſure to efface the criminal conduct which preceded it; yet cannot it obliterate the ſtain of Bourbon's exile, and Semblençai's execution. She was more lamented by her ſon, than by his people; and ſeems to have been quickly forgotten by both. Francis ſolemnized her funerals with his accuſtomed magnificence, and interred her at St. Denis, among the ſovereigns of France; and adulation, ever ready to celebrate even the imaginary virtues of the great, crowned her tomb with laurels and panegyrics.

The alliance between France and England ſtill ſubſiſted. The two kings, mutually deſirous of cementing it, met at St. Joquelvert, a little village between Calais and Boulogne. Every mark of mutual confidence, honour, and friendſhip, was ſhewn by each in turn, and all the appearances of a perfect union diſplayed in their behaviour. We find no period of hiſtory, when the interviews of monarchs were ſo common and frequent as in the ſixteenth century, and more peculiarly under this reign; yet none, where the compacts entered into were ſo ſoon violated, and the wars ſo obſtinately and continually renewed.

This conference was followed, in the enſuing year, by another of higher conſequence, and greater ſplendor: I mean the famous interview of Marſeilles. Francis, intoxicated with the wiſh to reconquer the Milaneſe, adapted

all his meaſures to that great purpoſe. He courted all the Italian princes, and eſpecially the houſe of Medicis, as capable of being made eminently ſubſervient to his views on the duchy. Theſe motives determined him to enter into the cloſeſt connections with Clement, the reigning pope, by demanding Catherine, his niece, in marriage for Henry duke of Orleans. The pontiff, flattered by this condeſcenſion in ſo great a monarch, and paſſionately anxious to aggrandiſe his family, accepted the offer with a pleaſure he did not affect to conceal. The king's gallies conducted him and the princeſs into France. Francis, attended by the queen and his whole court, made his entry into Marſeilles the day following that of his holineſs. The nuptials were celebrated with uncommon magnificence, and the feſtivities continued during five weeks. Henry and Catherine were both in very early youth. Their ages only differed by thirteen days, nor had either of them completed their fourteenth year: yet Clement, fearful leſt from the change of political circumſtances, the marriage, if not completed, might be liable to a diſſolution, demanded its inſtant conſummation; which was performed the ſame night. The king founded vaſt expectations on this alliance, in caſe of future hoſtilities with the emperor; but the untimely death of the pope, which happened only eleven months afterwards,

terwards, diſſipated, and rendered them ineffectual.

New cauſes of diſcontent between theſe powerful and inveterate rivals increaſed continually, and portended the renewal of thoſe convulſions which had already intereſted and diſturbed all Europe. Francis firſt openly appeared in arms. The execution of his agent at Milan, whom Franciſco Sforza, in the intention of gratifying Charles, had cauſed to be privately put to death in priſon, formed a pretext for the rupture: and as the duke of Savoy had likewiſe given many cauſes of umbrage and diſſatisfaction, beſides the refuſal of permiſſion to his troops to paſs through Piedmont, he no longer preſerved any meaſures with that prince. Brion, lately created admiral, entered, and ſubjected, almoſt without a blow, his whole dominions; while he vainly implored the emperor's protection. Sforza died at this time; and it is ſaid that terror at the approach of the French, from whom his family and himſelf had undergone ſo many evils, haſtened or produced the diſtemper of which he expired.

Meanwhile Charles, victorious from the capture of Tunis, and crowned with trophies gained over the Moors, prepared to revenge the injuries done to the duke of Savoy. After having given vent to his indignation againſt Francis, by an harangue in the conclave, filled with accuſations and complaints of his perfidy

and ambition, he joined his general Antonio de Leyva, ſo renowned for his great military exploits, and began the campaign. His victory in Africa; the ſervile flatteries of his courtiers and paraſites; joined to the predictions of aſtrologers and fortune-tellers, who were then in no ſmall eſtimation even with the wiſeſt princes; had ſo inflated his vanity, and perverted an underſtanding naturally cool, ſagacious, and diſcerning, that, in oppoſition to the entreaties of his oldeſt captains, he determined to enter Provence. Every argument and motive urged to diſſuade him were ineffectual. Blinded to reaſons the moſt cogent and forcible; untaught by Bourbon's experience and ill ſucceſs; he paſſed the river Var, and continued his march.

The king's wiſdom and provident care were never more ably exerted, than in this imminent neceſſity. Diſtruſtful of fortune, and cautious from the remembrance of paſt diſaſters, he reſolved to truſt no event to the uncertain fate of battle; but to embrace a plan more circumſpect and prudent. To enſure the ſafety of his kingdom, he ſacrificed a ſingle province; and anticipated the ravages of the Imperial forces, by laying waſte, and totally deſtroying the country through which he knew they muſt paſs. Himſelf encamped at Valence, and prepared to try the iſſue of a ſecond combat, in caſe Montmorenci, vanquiſhed

ed in a firſt, rendered it neceſſary for the general ſafety.

But while theſe public duties engroſſed the attention of the King, a ſtroke of the moſt calamitous nature befel the Parent. The dauphin, his eldeſt ſon, a prince of the higheſt expectations, and peculiarly dear to his father, and to France, expired at nineteen years of age. The circumſtances of his death, ſuſpicious, and indicative of poiſon, encreaſed his ſorrow and affliction. He had been engaged at tennis, in the meadow of Ainay near Lyons; and having violently heated himſelf by the exerciſe, diſpatched one of his pages to draw him ſome water. Donna Agnes Beatrix Pacheco, a lady of honour in the ſervice of the queen, had preſented him with a curious cup made of earth, which gave a remarkable coolneſs to any liquor poured into it. While the page laid down this cup on the ſide of the well, and was employed in pulling up the bucket, a certain Italian of Ferrara, by birth a nobleman, named Sebaſtian Montecuculi, approached, and unperceived mixed poiſon in the vaſe; which the dauphin immediately drank. He was ſeized with inſtant and moſt excruciating pains; but being warmly deſirous to embrace his father before his death, and to breathe his laſt in his arms, he cauſed himſelf to be put into a boat on the Rhone, in hopes of reaching the city of Valence

alive: but even this little conſolation was not reſerved for his unhappy parent. The dauphin died, before he could reach him, at Tournon. Francis's magnanimity and fortitude ſunk beneath ſo cruel and diſaſtrous a trial; and it was long before he recovered in any degree his wonted ſerenity. Henry, his ſecond ſon, was not equally dear to him with the one he had loſt. If we may credit the cotemporary hiſtorians, he poſſeſſed many of thoſe qualities which conciliate admiration and love. In his perſon, he was handſome, and formed with ſymmetry. His temper, ſerious, ſteady, and reſerved, ſeemed to indicate an underſtanding more ripe and mature than his years gave reaſon to expect: and his deportment at the interview of Marſeilles, impreſſed with reſpect and wonder, that numerous and auguſt aſſembly.

Montecuculi was arreſted, and confeſſed the crime. Under the violence of torture, he even accuſed Antonio de Leyva of being his accomplice, and threw out ſome dark and enigmatical inſinuations againſt the emperor himſelf: but theſe imputations are too palpably falſe and unworthy to admit of a moment's belief, and were merely extorted from the agony of pain. He was himſelf executed, and torn in pieces by wild horſes, at Lyons. The duke of Orleans ſucceeded to the title of dauphin, and

and left his own to Charles, the king's youngeſt ſon *.

Charles purſuing his route through Provence, during this ſad cataſtrophe, plundered the city of Aix, and ſat down before Marſeilles. At the end of a few weeks he found, when too late, the juſtice of thoſe remonſtrances which had been made him previous to his expedition. Antonio de Leyva had already breathed his laſt, killed by the ſame diſtemper which had carried off Lautrec before Naples. His troops became the prey of a thouſand diſeaſes incident to camps, and no proſpect appeared of the ſurrender of Marſeilles. Yielding to neceſſity, and compelled by theſe accumulated diſaſters which every day encreaſed, he began his march back into Savoy. All the roads were filled with his expiring ſoldiers; who, unable to ſupport the fatigue of ſo unfortunate and painful a retreat, and incapable of accompanying their comman-

* Notwithſtanding the general teſtimony of hiſtorians, there appears to be a great uncertainty ſpread over this whole tranſaction. Montecuculi impeached the Imperial generals: the French writers have not ſcrupled to name, and with more probability, Catherine of Medicis, as the perpetrator of the dauphin's murder, in the view of advancing her huſband to the throne: but even this ſuppoſition ought not to be embraced without ſtronger reaſons. Poiſon is uſually attributed to the ſudden exits of diſtinguiſhed perſonages; and the ſymptoms of the dauphin's diſeaſe and death might have all been produced by drinking cold water, after an exerciſe which had exceedingly heated his blood.

der, dropped under the weight of their arms, and fell into the hands of the enemy.—Montmorenci, carrying his maxims of timid circumſpection to an unjuſtifiable length, remained ſtill in his camp near Avignon; and, inſtead of following an army diſmayed and broken by toils, ſuffered them to eſcape, and repaſs the mountains.

Charles, covered with confuſion, and deſirous to hide his ſhame, remained only a ſhort time in Italy. He embarked on his gallies at Genoa; and arriving, after a dreadful tempeſt, in Spain, buried himſelf in the receſſes of his palace.

Mindful of the ancient alliances between the two crowns, and moved by the critical ſituation of France, menaced with ſo terrible an invaſion, James the fifth, king of Scotland, flew to the aſſiſtance of Francis. He came too late for any actual ſervice, the emperor being already on his retreat. This proof of generous and enthuſiaſtic attachment ſo deeply touched the king, that he could not refuſe him the boon he demanded; his daughter Magdalen. The princeſs was in the bloom of youth, beautiful, and accompliſhed: her ambition, gratified by a throne, induced her to accept with joy the propoſal, though every endeavour was uſed to inſtil into her an averſion to it. The nuptials were celebrated at Paris, and the young queen accompanied her huſband into his kingdom; but a hectic

a hectic fever, with which ſhe was ſeized ſoon after her arrival, put an end to her life, within a year from the marriage *. James, become a widower, and perſiſting in his deſire of being connected with France, received from the king, Mary of Guiſe in ſecond marriage.

The war was ſtill continued with alternate ſucceſs in Flanders and Piedmont: but the apparent intereſt which Francis took in the affairs of Scotland, and the two ſucceſſive unions with its ſovereign, gave a jealouſy to Henry the eighth, and gradually detached him from the ſtrict cordiality he had long poſſeſſed for him.

Montmorenci poſſeſſed at this time an influence the moſt extenſive and unbounded: he concentered in himſelf almoſt all the great powers of the royalty. To the ſword of conſtable, and grand maſter of the houſhold, was ſuperadded the ſovereign diſpoſal of the finances. Neither his talents or amiable qualities ſeem to have been ſuch, as rendered him wor-

* Brantome plainly indicates that her death was cauſed by ſorrow and mortification, at having ſacrificed her own delicious country to the ambition of reigning in a rude and babarous kingdom. When convinced by ſad experience of this truth, and conſcious that her deſtiny permitted her to return no more, ſhe ſunk under it, frequently exclaiming "Helas! j'ai voulu "etre reine!" Ronſard, the famous poet, has celebrated the nuptials, and very minutely deſcribed them in a ſort of epithalamium, not inelegant. He was at that time page to the duke of Orleans, who preſented him to the queen at her departure, and he accompanied her into Scotland.

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thy of theſe unparalleled and diſtinguiſhed favours; and we are ſurpriſed to find a man uniformly unfortunate in war, and intereſted or partial in the cabinet, the miniſter and moſt beloved companion of two kings.—His ignorance was extreme, in an age and court where letters were peculiarly honoured and cultivated. His manners, brutal and ferocious, diſguſted all who approached him. A temper ſtern, imperious, unfeeling, rendered him generally odious and dreaded. Courage, loyalty, and adulation cannot be denied him. Francis, naturally diſcerning, and capable, when not biaſſed by paſſion, of forming a juſt eſtimate of the human heart and mind, did not always continue to him that friendſhip and confidence. He diſgraced, and never would recall or employ him; but neither his conduct or advice could prevent his ſon from extending to him the ſame, or even greater honours, which continued without diminution till his death.

In the wiſh or pretence of inducing Charles and Francis to a final peace, Paul the third, who had ſucceeded to the pontificate, prevailed on both monarchs to agree to an interview at Nice. They came; but from uncertain motives, either perſonal or political, did not ſee each other. The pope, who affected to perform the office of a mediator, could only procure a truce of nine years: but the emperor, at his departure, promiſed to meet the king at

Aigues-

Aigues-Mortes in Languedoc. He came, at the inſtance of his ſiſter Eleanor; and landing without guards or precaution, waited on his rival, and dined in his tent. The enſuing day Francis returned this mark of confidence by a viſit to Charles; and was regaled on board his galley. Every demonſtration of mutual eſteem and friendſhip was interchanged. They embraced, and appeared to have obliterated all their paſt animoſities.—But the emperor, deeply ſkilled in the ſubtle mazes of policy, and well acquainted with the character of the king, generous, and, when piqued on his honour, carrying his punctilio to an extreme, foreſaw that he ſhould have occaſion to requeſt a paſſage through his dominions; and only wore the ſemblance of amity and concord, to deceive the more eaſily and effectually.

On his return from this interview, Francis, who paſſionately loved the ſtudy of nature, and poſſeſſed a curioſity of the moſt elegant and liberal kind, gratified himſelf by ſeveral reſearches which mark his turn of mind, and are not uſual in princes. He made a journey into Dauphiné, a province rich in romantic and ſingular beauties; in phænomena of various ſpecies. He even cauſed a boat to be conſtructed for the purpoſe of exploring a ſubterranean lake, near a village called Notre Dame de la Baulme, on the road from Grenoble to Lyons; and having ventured into it, proceeded a conſiderable

derable diſtance on the water: but a ſtrong current, which grew more rapid as they advanced, attended with a noiſe indicative of a whirl-pool, obliged his guides to deſiſt from a farther progreſs, and to reconduct him to the entrance of the grotto *.

Francis, who had already ſacrificed his firſt queen to his irregular pleaſures, experienced in turn the fatal effects of his indiſcretion; and was eventually a martyr to the moſt cruel of all diſeaſes. He became enamoured of a woman, known under the name of "La belle "Feroniere," in hiſtory. Her rank and condition are ſomewhat uncertain. Conſcious how dangerous it is to oppoſe the paſſions or deſires of princes, her huſband pretended to ſubmit to his own diſhonour: but nouriſhing the reſolution of vengeance, and unable to deviſe any other expedient, he voluntarily contracted a diſtemper, which he communicated to his unhappy wife, and ſhe, unknowingly, to the king. The huſband adminiſtered quick and effectual remedies to his complaint; but "La Feroni-"ere" ſurvived it only a ſhort time. Even Francis, whether from unſkilful treatment in

* This ſtory is inconteſtably authentic, and occurs in almoſt all the French hiſtorians. I have omitted many circumſtances, of it, as being too minute. The remains of a boat, ſaid to be that of Francis the firſt, were yet to be ſeen ſome few years ſince, in the cavern, through which is the paſſage to the lake. The "Sept merveilles de Dauphiné," are well known, and are yet viſited by the curious.

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his phyſicians, or neglect, never perfectly recovered this ſingular puniſhment. He underwent extreme pain from its effects; and, after dragging on ſeven or eight years of life, under a continual return of ſymptoms more and more alarming, expired in the vigour of his age; a melancholy leſſon of the dreadful conſequences of debauchery, and a proof that no exaltation of dignity can preclude revenge, or ſhield from jealous indignation *.

But though theſe were the pernicious attendants on his incontinence, yet was it productive of certain intermediate benefits to the kingdom. Pain and mental anxiety acting conſtantly on him, gradually affected and changed his diſpoſition. No longer capable of purſuing, as formerly, his appetites, unreſtrained, and compelled to a life more temperate and prudent; he renounced his profuſion, and became ſparing of the revenues. Favourites, uſed to the abuſe of his bounty, loſt their command over him. He applied more ſeriouſly to the

* Every writer of Francis's reign relates this extraordinary anecdote; and it is found, though with ſome uneſſential variation in minute particulars, in Mezerai, Varillas, Le Calendrier du Pere L'Enfant, Louis Guyon, Buffieres, Bayle, and many others.—The portrait of "La belle Feronier" is yet to be ſeen in cabinets, and forms one of the beauties in the famous collection of Odieuvre. The moſt common opinion is that her huſband was a lawyer; but that is not certain.——I think Dr. Burnet relates a ſimilar ſtory of James the ſecond, when duke of York.

great

great buſineſs of ſtate; and becoming ſplenetic, inacceſſible, and reſerved, introduced order through all the departments of government.

The rebellion of the inhabitants of Ghent, which took place at this time, ſerved to oppoſe, in the moſt ſtriking and eminent point of view, the different genius and character of Charles and Francis. So far was the latter from taking advantage of their inſurrection, and offers of ſubmiſſion to him, that he even gave advice of it to the emperor; and granted him a paſſage through his dominions, without laying him, as he might have done, under any conditions, except thoſe of gratitude and honour. Every attention of the moſt profound reſpect, of the moſt diſintereſted friendſhip, was laviſhly heaped upon him. The dauphin and duke of Orleans, accompanied by the conſtable, went to receive him at Bayonne, and even offered to go as hoſtages into Spain for the ſecurity of his perſon. The king himſelf, though exceedingly indiſpoſed by illneſs, advanced as far as Chatelleraud in Poictou, where they gave each other all the marks of eſteem and amity at their rencontre. Honours more than regal were ſhewn him; all orders of the ſtate vied in their endeavours to welcome his arrival, and to heighten the ſplendor of his entry into the capital.

It was debated in the cabinet, to improve the occaſion, and to compel the emperor by force,

force, if not by benefits, to the reſtitution of the Milaneſe, which he had engaged himſelf by a verbal promiſe to do, previous to his entry into the kingdom. Montmorenci alone declared againſt the general ſentiment: and, whether influenced by Charles's applauſes, who flattered and careſſed him to the greateſt degree; whether induced to give this counſel from an attachment to the queen Eleanor, or from motives yet more uncertain and concealed; prevailed on Francis, eaſily led to comply with the dictates of his native dignity of ſoul, and ſcorning the arts of a ſordid policy, to lay him under no reſtriction. He even conducted himſelf towards the emperor with a delicacy unexampled; accompanied him, on his departure to St. Quintin, and ſent his two ſons to attend him to Valenciennes. Theſe accumulated favours were repaid with the meaneſt breach of his word, with ſubterfuges and evaſions too low for repetition. Charles who never meant to reſign the rich duchy of Milan, and only ſought to deceive a rival too honourable for the crooked line of princely conduct, avowed his intention when he no longer feared repriſals; and, like his grandfather Ferdinand, did not bluſh at a ſucceſsful perfidy *.

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* There is a curious anecdote on the ſubject of Charles's paſſage through France, and eſcape, in Dupleix; who attributes it almoſt entirely to the ducheſs of Eſtampes. Francis, in

The indignation, mixed with ſhame, which the king felt at being thus egregiouſly the dupe of his too ſcrupulous and unſuſpecting honour, rouſed him from that ſupine reliance on the counſel of others, which he had hitherto indulged. His penetration made him ſee, that treachery in his own ſervants, had been added to the emperor's duplicity, and jointly impoſed on his underſtanding. As he carried his inſpection deeper into the arcana of adminiſtration, new proofs of the pernicious abuſe which his favourites had made of the royal ear or affection crouded upon him. Pleaſure, ſeductive and faſcinating, had ceaſed to delude his ripened judgment; the cares and duties of a great monarch, anxious for the public weal, ſucceeded to their empire in his boſom; and the ſhining virtues which nature had early planted there, but whoſe growth

in preſenting his miſtreſs to the emperor, ſaid "Mon frere, cette "belle dame me conſeille de vous obliger à detruire à Paris "l'ouvrage de Madrid;" to which he coldly replied, "Si le "conſeil en eſt bon, il faut le ſuivre." Alarmed however at this intimation of the ducheſs's ſentiments, and conſcious of her power over the king, he determined to exert his whole addreſs to detach her from him. On the enſuing day, when water was offered him to waſh, Madame d'Eſtampes held the napkin. In pulling off a diamond of prodigious value, which he wore on his finger, he purpoſely let it drop; and ſhe having taken it up, Charles refuſed to accept it, adding gallantly, that it too well became the hand where fortune had placed it, to take it away. The ducheſs was too grateful for the preſent. ——There is an air of fiction and romance in all this, nor can it be much relied on; though it is but too clear that ſhe had intelligence with Charles, in the ſequel.

had

had been retarded, and luſtre dimmed, by a too early acceſſion to the crown, rekindled in an age leſs ſuſceptible of flattery.

This alteration of ſentiment was followed by as total a change of action. The perſons to whom the firſt offices and charges had been confided, were diſgraced. Brion, admiral of France, was degraded from his high poſt; and though the interceſſion of the ducheſs of Eſtampes, to whom he was allied by blood, alleviated the ſeverity of his proſecution and ſentence, yet he died the victim of his mortified pride, and humbled fortunes. Poyet, the chancellor, was the ſecond ſacrifice; and his puniſhment, more rigorous and extenſive, reduced him to penury and extreme diſtreſs. His conduct while he held the ſeals, no leſs reproachable than Du Prat's, his predeceſſor, deprived him, in this calamitous condition, of the popular commiſeration. Theſe two conſpicuous removals only ſerved to prepare a yet greater fall, that of the conſtable, ſo long unrivalled in Francis's love. The cauſe cannot be exactly aſcertained, nor can we even poſitively know whether it was more political, or perſonal. It is ſaid, that a jealouſy of the dauphin's growing attachment to him, gave umbrage to his father, and ſerved to corroborate the other reaſons I have enumerated. Montmorenci retired from court, and amuſed himſelf in the erection of the caſtle of Ecoüen, near

near St. Denis, during his exile; nor could the king ever be perſuaded to recal or employ him, by any inſtances or endeavours for that purpoſe. The cardinal of Tournon, a man of mediocrity of talents, but poſſeſſing application, and capacity for buſineſs, was inveſted with the higheſt employment of ſtate; and the marechal d'Annebaut, who ſucceeded Brion as admiral, divided with him the king's confidence.

After near two years of intrigue, negociation, and inſidious propoſals on the part of the emperor, relative to the pretended reſignation of the Milaneſe in favour of Charles duke of Orleans; Francis, conſcious that theſe meaſures would never produce the end intended, and irritated by the marquis del Guaſto's murder of his two ambaſſadors to the republic of Venice and Solyman emperor of the Turks, openly took up arms, and renewed the war. He even made efforts of a nature more extraordinary than any during his whole reign. Henry, the dauphin, was placed at the head of a fine army in the Rouſillon, and laid ſiege to Perpignan; but after a vain attempt, was neceſſitated to retire without ſucceſs. His brother Charles, after a much more proſperous campaign in Flanders, abandoned his triumphs in the midway; and, inflamed with the wiſh to combat the emperor, who was expected to come to the reſcue of Perpignan, quitted his troops,

and

and croſſed all France to Montpellier, where his father had remained, to wait the event. Scarce any advantageous conſequences reſulted from theſe great armaments.

Francis gave at this time an inſtance of the moſt amiable clemency, in his treatment of the inhabitants of La Rochelle, who had revolted. After having entered with a great military train into the city, which was incapable of defence, and expoſed to his reſentment; he firſt pointed out to them, in an eloquent harangue, the enormity of their crime, and then pardoned it, without reſtriction, in the moſt ample manner.

The king of England, capricious, and the ſport of his tumultuous paſſions, had once more broke with Francis, and renewed his ancient alliance with his rival. The Netherlands became the ſcene of hoſtilities; and, though incommoded from illneſs, he was neceſſitated to command his forces in perſon. Luxembourg was taken, but no conqueſt of importance atchieved.

Induced by the preſſing ſolicitations of the king, Solyman the magnificent diſpatched the renowned pirate Barbaroſſa, with a hundred and thirty gallies, to his aid: in conjunction with the French fleet, he laid ſiege to Nice, but raiſed it diſhonourably; and Francis, covered with the reproaches of all the chriſtian princes, for this union with their common enemy,

my, derived from it ſcarce any benefit or utility. In Flanders he was more ſucceſsful: Charles, who had led a formidable army into the field, was repulſed before Landrecy, by the valour of the garriſon; and after having ſeized on Cambray, an imperial city, retired into winter quarters.

After ten years of ſterility, Catherine of Medicis was at length delivered of a ſon, who was named Francis, and afterwards aſcended the throne. Her character had not yet unveiled and diſplayed itſelf: the genius of Francis, and the circumſtances of the times, repreſſed and concealed it. She poſſeſſed no political influence, had no ſeat in the cabinet. Her barrenneſs contributed to diminiſh her conſequence, and even gave room to ſome propoſals for a diſſolution of the marriage, but which were relinquiſhed. Even in this ſituation, her addreſs was viſible: ſhe made the moſt aſſiduous and ſucceſsful court to the king, who began to decline, from his indiſpoſitions: ſhe accompanied him to the chace; formed one of that celebrated party, known by the title of "La petite bande de dames de la "cour;" and attended him on his private excurſions to Chambord, Fontainbleau, and Madrid, where he laid aſide the cares of ſtate, and unbent himſelf in the company of a ſelect number of his favourites. Theſe complaiſant and winning attentions, rendered her infinitely dear

to

to Francis. — To her huſband, the dauphin, ſhe was no leſs ſubmiſſive: he was already enſlaved to Diana de Poitiers, whoſe faction, oppoſed to that of madame d'Eſtampes, divided the court. In this moſt delicate and critical condition, ſhe yet rendered herſelf acceptable by a humility and flexibility of conduct rarely found; and, reſerving the latent capacities with which ſhe was endowed for more favourable times, was content to remain in comparative obſcurity *.

The war between the two monarchs was carried on with redoubled violence. Francis had confided the ſupreme command in Piedmont to the count d'Enguien. This young hero, only twenty-one years of age, had already raiſed the higheſt expectations: in him revived the genius of Gaſton de Foix; and like him, his glories were ſwallowed up by a haſty extinction. Brother to Anthony duke of Vendome, and to Louis prince of Condé ſo re-

* Though certain authors have ſpoken of the "Petite bande dames de la cour," as a moſt diſſolute and voluptuous aſſociation, yet there can be no doubt of the falſity of ſuch an accuſation. It is likewiſe ſaid, that Catherine prevented a divorce between Henry and herſelf, by the intereſt of Diana de Poitiers, his miſtreſs, of which ſhe did not ſcruple to make uſe; but this is very problematical, and much to be diſputed. Uniform tradition, and ſeveral cotemporary writers, attribute to Fernel, firſt phyſician to the king, the merit of rendering her capable of bearing children, by ſome medical aſſiſtance given to her conſtitution; and there ſeems every reaſon to believe it.

nowned

nowned in the unhappy wars of Charles the ninth, his rank entitled him to the higheſt employments, and his capacity made him worthy of them. The battle of Cerizoles, which he gained over the marquis del Guaſto, who fled, wounded in the knee, renewed the remembrance of Ravenna's day. All the Milaneſe would have been the inevitable conſequence of this important victory, if urgent neceſſity had not compelled the king to renounce Italian conqueſts, in the more preſſing exigency of domeſtic invaſion. Charles and Henry entering Picardy with two great armies, menaced France with calamities ſuperior to any ſhe had yet experienced. Had the junction been made which was originally ſtipulated, the kingdom would probably have been reduced to the verge of ruin: but the emperor's error in laying ſiege to St. Diſier, which detained him more than ſix weeks—and the king of England's refuſal to join him, or deſiſt from his attempt on Boulogne—gave Francis time to provide for the ſafety of his capital and dominions. He was himſelf too much enfeebled by his complaints, to head the army in perſon; which was intruſted to the dauphin. The emperor advancing, ſpread terror and conſternation. Paris, abandoned by its inhabitants, was left almoſt unpeopled, and preſented a ſcene the moſt diſtreſsful: ſcarce could the king's arrival calm their agitations, and reſtore any ſort of tranquillity.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile his ſon Henry, active, martial, and warmed with enthuſiaſm in ſo great a cauſe, had reduced Charles, in turn, to the greateſt difficulties for want of forage and proviſions. He muſt even, it is probable, have ſued for a ceſſation of arms, or made a difficult and ſhameful retreat, if the intrigues of the ducheſs of Eſtampes had not extricated him from his perilous ſituation, by a private information of thoſe places where magazines were provided. The motive to this infamous and treaſonable conduct in the king's miſtreſs, was her jealouſy of the dauphin's glory, and partiality for the duke of Orleans; to whom ſhe hoped Charles would reſign the Milaneſe, and under whoſe protection ſhe flattered herſelf with a ſecure aſylum after Francis's death. Though her ſuccour had prevented his troops from being deſtroyed by famine, yet many circumſtances hung the fortune of the campaign in ſuſpence: and Henry, panting to ſignalize his proweſs, and ſhew himſelf worthy the crown he was deſtined to inherit, might ſtill have ſnatched from him the trophies he had gained.—Theſe conſiderations prevailed on the emperor to propoſe, or permit the propoſal, of a final peace. Two Dominican friars, Diegos Chiavez, and Gabriel de Guſman, were the conductors of this negociation, which was warmly ſeconded by Eleanor, Francis's queen. The dauphin, on the other hand, ſtrongly and violently

olently oppoſed it, as inglorious, unneceſſary, and a ſacrifice of the national honour to the aggrandiſement of his brother, the only object intended by the contrary faction. The king, after ſome irreſolution, ranged himſelf on the ſide of his youngeſt ſon, for whom he indulged a partial fondneſs.—The treaty was, in conſequence, leſs calculated for public benefit, than that of the duke of Orleans, to whom the emperor promiſed his daughter, with the low countries, or Milaneſe, in dowry, within two years. A contingent and future advantage; in return for which, Francis reſigned almoſt all his conqueſts in Savoy or Piedmont; and which Charles never accompliſhed!—Henry the dauphin proteſted publicly againſt this treaty, ſo injurious to his intereſts.

The capture of Boulogne, which had fallen into the king of England's hands, had ſerved to haſten its concluſion; and Francis, anxious for the recovery of ſo important a place, not only ſent his eldeſt ſon to form the ſiege of it, but advanced in perſon, accompanied by his youngeſt to the abbey of Foret Mouſtier, ten leagues diſtant, between Abbeville and Montreuil. Here he was again overwhelmed by a new affliction, to which he was infinitely ſenſible; the death of the duke of Orleans. This prince was the unhappy victim of his own puerile temerity, and want of conſideration. The plague had

had appeared in the environs of the village where the king was lodged: his ſon, notwithſtanding the intreaties and remonſtrances of his attendants, perſiſted to ſleep in a houſe ſaid to be infected; alledging, that in the annals of the monarchy was there no inſtance of a ſon of France who had died of the plague. He even carried his fatal indiſcretion to a yet more extraordinary length; and having pulled out the bedding ſaid to be tainted, ran up and down covered with the feathers. He was ſeized almoſt immediately with the diſtemper predicted, and expired ſoon after. His unfortunate parent fainted at the mournful news of the loſs of this favourite child, for whom he had with ſo much care provided a rich inheritance.

The duke of Orleans was only twenty-three years old: in perſon he reſembled Francis more than either of his elder ſons, and was the handſomeſt of his three children. He had no bodily defect, except that the ſmall-pox had injured one of his eyes; but even this was not diſcernable. As the features of his face bore a peculiar ſimilarity to thoſe of his father, ſo did the leading ſtrokes of his character. Lively, animated, courageous, active, and incapable of diſguiſe or reſerve: but with thoſe errors and foibles which commonly characteriſe youth; preſumption, warmth, and vanity. He was doubtleſs a prince of high expectations, if the rivalſhip and avowed animoſity between him and

the dauphin had not rendered it too probable, that after Francis's death, the brothers would no longer preſerve any meaſures. The emperor fomented this diſunion; and, by an affected predilection for, and preference of him, inſtilled deeper ſuſpicions into Henry's boſom; ſo that perhaps his untimely end was not injurious to the ſtate, however calamitous and oppreſſive to the father.—Charles immediately declared, that by this accident he held himſelf acquitted from his promiſe relative to the Milaneſe; and refuſed any reſignation or inveſtiture of it.

The death of the count d'Enguien, who had ſo lately acquired an immortal renown in Italy, and whoſe age was almoſt exactly the ſame with that of the prince deceaſed, renewed the grief of Francis, who wept his loſs in the deepeſt ſorrow. There is an ambiguity ſpread over this event, hard to penetrate. The count was engaged at play with the youth of the court. It was at La Roche-ſur-Yonne: a coffer thrown purpoſely from a window on his head, killed him on the ſpot. Cornelio Bentivoglio, an Italian nobleman, with whom he previouſly had ſome diſpute, was accuſed of this deteſtable and cowardly action: but the king would not permit the affair to be minutely examined, or any diſquiſition entered into, from the fear of finding that the dauphin was privy to, or involved in the crime.

A peace

A peace, long wiſhed for by the two kings of France and England, at length took place. Henry promiſed to reſtore Boulogne in eight years, on condition of a certain annual ſum; and Francis, releaſed from this object of attention, bent all his cares to the empire, where Charles had openly attempted to eſtabliſh an unlimited power.

As he approached the termination of his life, the violence of the two parties, which divided the court, redoubled. The ducheſs of Eſtampes had endeavoured to ſpread a report, that Diana de Poitiers was the cauſe of the duke of Orleans's death, by the adminiſtration of poiſon. To this cruel imputation, ſhe had added many contemptuous expreſſions on the decay of her perſonal charms; and openly declared, that the year of Diana's marriage was that of her own birth. The dauphin, in revenge for theſe aſperſions on his miſtreſs's fame, had indulged himſelf in ſome very ſevere and pointed ſarcaſms on the ducheſs's fidelity. He even preſumed to aſſert, that ſhe conſoled herſelf for his father's ſickneſs in the arms of another; and he named the celebrated Guy Chabot, Seigneur de Jarnac, as the perſon, though he was nearly allied to her, having married her ſiſter. This accuſation reached the king's ear, who highly reſented it, and would have rigorouſly puniſhed the author, had not his name been concealed. Jarnac denied the fact; which

La Chataigneraye, a favourite of the dauphin's, proteſted he had communicated to him; and from this ſource originated the famous duel which took place on Henry the ſecond's acceſſion *.

We draw towards the cloſe of this great reign. Henry the eighth of England's death alarmed and diſquieted the king; he had long known him, and a degree of diſtant analogy and reſemblance in their characters, had united them to each other, in defiance of their frequent wars, and jarring intereſts. Francis cauſed a requiem and ſervice to be ſaid for the repoſe of his ſoul, though he died excommunicated, and without the pale of the church. He conſidered it as a prognoſtic of his own approaching end, and was deeply af-

* It was not only with Jarnac, that madame d'Eſtampes kas been accuſed of infidelity. The count de Boſſu, and the Seigneur de Dampierre, have been likewiſe named; but none of theſe are proved, and probably only originated from the dauphin and his miſtreſs's hatred. Even Brantome, partial to his uncle La Chataigneraie, only inſinuates, that the ducheſs was not ſtrictly faithful to Francis, as he did not pique himſelf on his fidelity to her. It was not her perſonal, but political conduct, which rendered her obnoxious to Henry; who, after his father's death, proteſted againſt the abuſe which ſhe had made of her influence over him, and aided publicly the proſecution againſt her.—There have been authors ſo abſurd as to pretend, that Francis never had any other connections with her than thoſe of mind, during two-and-twenty years: it would be ridiculous to attempt to diſprove this formally. The complexion of the king, amorous and warm; the beauty, and many attractions of the ducheſs, refute it ſufficiently.

fected

fected by it. No effectual remedies could be adminiſtered to his diſeaſe, which was grown inveterate: his uneaſineſs and anxiety of mind encreaſed its virulence. He wandered from one place to another, depreſſed and languid. a ſlow fever, produced by corporal and intellectual pain, began to waſte his already exhauſted conſtitution; and at length, becoming more violent and continued, forced him to ſtop at the little chateau of Rambouillet.—Here, finding himſelf worſe, and reſigning the hope of life, he ſent for his ſon Henry, that he might addreſs to him his dying words.—They were worthy a great king expiring.——He admoniſhed him, that children ſhould imitate the virtues, and not the vices of their parents; that the French people, as the moſt loyal and liberal of any in the world to their ſovereigns, merited in return to be protected, not oppreſſed by them. He recommended to him, in terms the moſt forcible and perſuaſive, the diminution of the impoſts and taxes, which continual wars had forced him to encreaſe to an unprecedented heighth. He requeſted him never to recall Montmorenci; and to continue the cardinal of Tournon, and the marechal d'Annebaut in the miniſtry, as virtuous and diſintereſted ſtateſmen. Henry ſhewed little deference to theſe counſels, when he aſcended the throne. His father did not ſurvive much longer: the perfect poſſeſſion

of his underſtanding and ſpeech accompanied him to the laſt moment: he expired at length, aged only fifty-two years, of which he had reigned thirty-two. The magnificence which had diſtinguiſhed him through life, did not forſake him even in death: his funeral obſequies were performed with unuſual pomp, and attended by eleven cardinals: a thing unprecedented in France!

I have been irreſiſtibly and inſenſibly drawn into too minute a narration of Francis's reign, to render it neceſſary to be equally diffuſe in the deſcription of his character. Such are the principal ſtrokes of it, that they cannot be miſtaken. We ſhall love and admire his magnanimity, his clemency, his munificence, his romantic and ſcrupulous honour. We ſhall confeſs and reſpect his capacity, his courage, his protection of genius and the arts, his heroiſm and fortitude.—We ſhall pity, and hide beneath the veil of candour and humanity, his profuſion, his want of application, his too great ſubſerviency to miniſters, favourites, and miſtreſſes, who abuſed his bounty.—No prince of the age in which he lived, intereſts ſo deeply; none was ſo much celebrated, and the ſubject of ſuch univerſal panegyric. Though uſually unſucceſsful in his wars, he yet acquired more glory than the emperor his competitor; and Francis is more truly great after the defeat of Pavia, or in the caſtle of Madrid,

rid, than Charles triumphant, and impoſing conditions on his priſoner. His largeſſes, his princely liberality, his condeſcending attentions to men diſtinguiſhed by their ſuperior merit, acquired him a fame not inferior to Leo the tenth, and leſs oſtentatious than that of Louis the fourteenth. We all know that Leonardo-da-Vinci expired in his arms, from the effort he made to expreſs his ſenſe of the honours done him, by ſo auguſt a monarch.

No European court vied with that of Francis in brilliance and luſtre. He was himſelf the animating ſoul, which diffuſed a radiance over it.—During the laſt ten years of his life, his character riſes upon the view. Notwithſtanding all the previous diſorder in the finances, notwithſtanding the numerous and ſplendid palaces he erected, the donations he made, the collections of paintings, and other monuments of art which he purchaſed, the inceſſant wars he ſuſtained; yet at his death the royal domain was free, a vaſt ſum in the treaſury, and a quarter of his revenues ready to enter it.—His very foibles and errors were ſuch as mark a feeling and generous boſom; ſuch as we pardon while we cenſure. His promiſcuous amours carried with them their own puniſhment, and conducted him to the tomb untimely, before age had diminiſhed his faculties or powers. To Henry the fourth he bears

a ſtriking reſemblance; and this latter prince, ſo worthy of immortal praiſe, was flattered and charmed with the compariſon of himſelf to Francis whom he imitated and emulated. The proclamation in the hall of the palace, which announced his death, was couched in theſe words: "Prince clement en paix, victorieux "en guerre, pere et reſtaurateur des bonnes "lettres, et des arts liberaux." An eulogium great and dazzling, but yet far unequal, in real and intrinſic dignity, to that conferred on his predeceſſor!

By Eleanor, his ſecond wife, he never had any iſſue; and on his deceaſe ſhe retired firſt into the Netherlands, and afterwards into Spain; in which country ſhe died, at Talavera, near Badajox, eleven years after her huſband. We know not that Francis had any children by either of his moſt celebrated miſtreſſes, madame de Chateau-Briand, and the ducheſs of Eſtampes*.

* Brantome has mentioned a certain "Villecouvin," as his illegitimate ſon; but this is very dubious.—It is curious to find in the Jeſuite Garaſſe, and in Sanderus, that Anne Bolyn is accuſed of having been one of Francis's miſtreſſes. They not only vilify her character by invictives the moſt illiberal; but deſcribe her perſon in language ſo extraordinary, that I cannot help copying it from the latter of theſe writers.—"Anne de Boleyn avoit ſix doigts à la main droite; le viſage "long, jaune, comme ſi elle eut eu les pales couleurs; et "une loupe ſous la gorge."—Is this the beautiful Anne Boleyn? It is at leaſt impoſſible to recognize her under theſe frightful and ridiculous colours.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

Character of Henry the ſecond.—Changes in the ſtate.—Diana de Poitiers.—Her character.—Romantic attachment of the king.—Diſgrace of the ducheſs of Eſtampes.—Duel of Jarnac and La Chataigneraie.—Inſurrections in Guyenne. Perſecution of the proteſtants.—Death of Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre.—Character.—War renewed between Henry and the emperor.—Catherine of Medicis left regent.—Siege of Metz,—War continued.—The emperor abdicates.—Power of Diana ducheſs of Valentinois.—The duke of Guiſe ſent againſt Naples.—Battle of St. Quentin.—Capture of Calais.—Marriage of Francis the dauphin to Mary of Scotland.—Circumſtances.—Peace concluded.—Carouſals of the court.—The king's unexpected death.—Enumeration of the circumſtances which attended it.—Character of Henry the ſecond.—Miſtreſſes.—Reflections.

THOUGH the death of ſo great a prince as Francis the firſt, at a period of life when his character promiſed happineſs and tranquillity to his people, was an event deeply to be lamented by thoſe to whom the intereſts of the ſtate were dear; yet as his ſucceſſor had attained to years of manhood, and did not appear

pear to be deficient in the qualities requiſite for government, his loſs might be deemed not irreparable.

Henry the ſecond, who aſcended the throne, was the handſomeſt monarch of his age, and the moſt accompliſhed cavalier in his dominions. He ſurpaſſed in all the martial exerciſes where vigour and addreſs are neceſſary; and bore away the prize in tournaments with diſtinguiſhed grace. His heart was beneficent and humane; his temper courteous, open, and liberal. His intentions were ever honourable, and directed to the public good; but he neither poſſeſſed the capacity or diſcernment which Francis eminently diſcovered: and, naturally tractable, and yielding to others, was formed to be under the guidance of favourites.

His father's dying exhortations had made no impreſſion on his heart, produced no effect on his conduct. Scarce were his funeral rites performed, when he violated them in every point. Montmorenci, who had been during ſeveral years in diſgrace, was recalled, and loaded, with honours. The admiral d'Annebaut was diſmiſſed, and the cardinal of Tournon only retained a ſhadow of authority. In their place, Francis duke of Guiſe, ſo celebrated in the ſubſequent reigns, and the marechal de St André, were ſubſtituted. That pernicious profuſion, which had characteriſed the commencement of the late king's government, was carried

to

to a more unjuſtifiable length; and the treaſures amaſſed during his concluding years, were diſſipated with a wanton extravagance.

Diana de Poitiers, who may be ſaid to have divided the crown with her lover; and who carried her influence, perſonal and political, to a pitch which madame d'Eſtampes never could attain, was the directing principle of Henry's councils, the object of his tendereſt attachment, and unlimited homage. This extraordinary woman, unparalleled in the annals of hiſtory, retained her beauty undiminiſhed even in the autumn of life, and preſerved her powers of enſlaving, of faſcinating, in defiance of time and natural decay. She was already forty-eight, while Henry had ſcarce attained his twenty-ninth year. Her father, John de Poitiers, Signeur de St. Vallier, had been condemned to die as an accomplice in the revolt of the conſtable Charles of Bourbon; and though he eſcaped with life, yet he was degraded from the nobility, and all his fortunes confiſcated *. She

* Mezerai, the preſident Henault, and many other writers, have aſſerted, that ſhe was the inſtrument of her father's preſervation, by the ſacrifice of her chaſtity to Francis the firſt; from whoſe embraces ſhe paſſed into thoſe of his ſon: but this is very dubious, not to ſay certainly miſtaken. She had been married near ten years at that time, and conſequently had not, as thoſe authors ſeem to imagine, her *virgin honour* to give. Beſides, though her father's life was not taken, his puniſhment was commuted for another, worſe than death; that of

She was married in the laſt year of Louis the twelfth's reign, to Louis de Brezé, count de Maulevrier, and grand ſenechal of Normandy; by whom ſhe had two daughters ſtill alive. It is not certain when her connections with the dauphin firſt commenced; but it appears, that before he had completed his eighteenth year, her aſcendancy over him was well eſtabliſhed. All the cotemporary authors agree in their aſſurances, that her charms were of the moſt captivating kind, and worthy a monarch's love. To theſe corporal endowments, ſhe united a cultivated and juſt underſtanding, wit, and an animated converſation. Warmly devoted to her friends and partizans, ſhe was a dangerous and implacable enemy: of high and unſubmitting ſpirit, ſhe transfuſed thoſe ſentiments into the royal boſom, and impelled him to actions of vigour and firmneſs. Fond of power, ſhe was yet more ſo of flattery and ſubmiſſion. The nobles crouded to expreſs their dutiful attentions to this idol; and even the conſtable, rude, haughty, and more accuſtomed to inſult than flatter, bent beneath her, and condeſcended to ingratiate himſelf by the meaneſt adulation.

The tyes which chiefly bound Henry to her, were probably firſt thoſe of pleaſure and vo-

of being immured perpetually between four walls, in which there ſhould be only one little window, through which his proviſions might be given him. St. Vallier died of a fever, produced by terror, in a very ſhort time afterwards.

luptuous

luptuous enjoyment; and afterwards habit, taſte, and preſcription. In vain did the ducheſs of Eſtampes exert every art of female rivalry and hatred, to ſeparate and diſunite them: in vain did ſhe publiſh, that Diana was married in the ſame year, which gave herſelf birth.—Theſe efforts only encreaſed the paſſion they were deſigned to extinguiſh. The king carried it to an incredible and romantic length; he gave her every public, as well as private proof of her empire over him. The furniture of his palaces, his armour, the public edifices, were all diſtinguiſhed with her device and emblems; a moon, bow, and arrows. Every favour or preferment was obtained thro' her intereſt; and Briſſac, the moſt amiable and gallant nobleman of the court, ſaid to be peculiarly acceptable to her, was created grand maſter of the artillery, at her particular requeſt.—The Count de Boſſu, who had been intimately connected with the late king's miſtreſs, and was accuſed of treaſonable practices with the emperor, could only ſhelter himſelf from puniſhment by a reſignation of his palace at Marchez to the cardinal of Lorain. The ducheſs of Eſtampes, unſupported by the croud of flatterers who attended on her in Francis's reign, was neceſſitated to quit the court;—but Diana, whether from motives of prudence or magnanimity, did not attempt to deſpoil her of the poſſeſſions ſhe had acquired from the late king's generoſity. Diſgraced,

graced, and forſaken, ſhe retired to one of her country houſes, where ſhe lived many years in total obſcurity *.

Henry having returned from a viſit which he made to the frontier of Picardy, not only permitted, but was preſent with all his courtiers at the celebrated duel between Jarnac and La Chataigneraie. It was decided at St. Germain-en-Laye. The quarrel had originated from the accuſation of the latter reſpecting Madame d'Eſtampes's infidelity; and was increaſed by a ſecond imputation, ſtill more diſhonourable to Jarnac, that of having been criminally intimate with his father's ſecond wife. La Chataigneraie was one of the moſt accompliſhed cavaliers, and moſt acceptable to the king, of any in his dominions. Skilled in the practice of arms, vain of his acknowledged addreſs, relying on the royal favour, and elated with ſo many advantages, he deſpiſed his antagoniſt; and vaunted to his miſtreſs, that he would preſent her a "Tete de Chabot," alluding to Jarnac's family name. He, more cautious, and neither ſupported by ſuperior force, or ſti-

* It is ſomewhat extraordinary, that the year of Madame d'Eſtampes's death is not mentioned by any cotemporary author. All we know is, that ſhe was yet alive in 1575, as ſhe did homage at that time for one of her eſtates. She became a protectreſs to the Lutherines or Hugonots, for whom ſhe had always a concealed affection; and this is the only circumſtance we are acquainted with of her retreat.

mulated

mulated by the regal patronage, endeavoured to ſupply theſe defects by artificial aid. A fever had diminiſhed even his uſual ſtrength and activity; but the preſumptuous negligence of La Chataigneraie decided the duel in his favour. By a ſtroke totally unexpected, he wounded him in the ham, and threw him to the ground. Henry inſtantly flung down his baton, to ſuſpend the engagement: Jarnac, as the law of arms required, deſiſted; but his competitor, ſtung with diſappointment, covered with ſhame, and incapable of ſurviving theſe accumulated mortifications, would not accept of a life which he deemed ignominious; and having torn off the bandages applied to his wounds, expired ſoon after. The king was ſo deeply touched with this combat, and its event, ſo oppoſite to his wiſhes and expectations, that he made a ſolemn vow, never, during his reign, to permit a ſecond, on whatever pretext.

The ſources of future wars, unextinguiſhed by the death of Francis, began to generate between the emperor and Henry; though as yet many cirumſtances conduced to retard and protract an open rupture. This latter prince made a progreſs through part of his dominions, attended with ſplendid entries into the principal cities; and on his return he celebrated the nuptials of Anthony duke of Vendome with

with Jane d'Albret, heireſs of the kingdom of Navarre, at the city of Moulins*.

A dan-

* The young princeſs had been eſpouſed ſeveral years before to the duke of Cleves. Francis the firſt was preſent at this ceremony, which was performed with great ſplendor at Chatelleraud in Poictou: but the marriage was not conſummated, on account of her extreme youth, ſhe being at that time little more than twelve years old. The day was rendered remarkable by the diſmiſſion and diſgrace of the conſtable Montmorenci; which was preceded by a very ſingular circumſtance, ſuppoſed to foretel his approaching fall. The bride according to the manners of the age, was habited in robes ſo weighty, and charged with ſo many pearls and jewels, that not being able to move, Francis commanded the conſtable to take her in his arms, and carry her to the church. Though this cuſtom was uſual at the nuptials of great perſons, yet Montmorenci was deeply hurt by being ſelected for ſuch an office; and regarding it as an inconteſtible proof of his ruin, heſitated not to declare to his friends, that his favour was at an end. The event juſtified his ſuſpicion; for immediately after the banquet, the king diſmiſſed him from his ſervice, and he quitted the court directly. Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre, and mother to Jane d'Albert, was ſuppoſed, by her intereſt with her brother, to have accelerated his downfall. The conſtable had not ſcrupled to accuſe her to Francis, of being attached to, and protecting the Hugonots. By this imputation againſt his beloved ſiſter, he offended the king, and raiſed up an implacable and powerful enemy in Margaret herſelf.

The marriage of Jane with the duke of Cleves, which had been chiefly made in compliance with the wiſhes of Francis the firſt, was afterwards broken from motives of policy, on his death. But Brantome ſays, that Anthony duke of Vendome had great ſcruples of delicacy relative to eſpouſing the princeſs; and had recourſe to the ſenechale of Poictou, who was at the time of her firſt nuptials a lady of honour to the queen of Navarre, to clear up his ſuſpicions.

A dangerous inſurrection, which broke out at this time in Guienne, rendering it neceſſary to ſend into the province ſome general of rank and experience, the duke of Guiſe, and the conſtable were both charged with that commiſſion. The former, courteous, humane, and paſſionately deſirous to conciliate popular favour, entered Saintonge and Angoumois, diſpenſing pardon, or only puniſhing with lenity and gentleneſs; but Montmorenci, ſtern, inexorable, and with a ſeverity of temper which approached to cruelty, marked his courſe along the Garonne with blood; and, deaf to the ſupplications of the inhabitants, who had recourſe to ſubmiſſions and deprecations, put to death above a hundred of the principal citizens of Bourdeaux, and deprived the city of all its municipal rights and privileges. A conduct ſo oppoſite, produced ſentiments equally diſſimilar in reſpect to the two commanders; and from this æra the family of Guiſe began to date that popularity, which in the ſequel they carried to ſo prodigious and dangerous a length againſt the crown itſelf.

ſuſpicions.——She did ſo; and gave him the moſt ſolemn and ſatisfactory proofs, that her firſt marriage had been merely a ceremony; to which, as reaſons of ſtate gave riſe, ſo oppoſite ones might equally diſſolve it at pleaſure.

The

The court meanwhile was immerſed in carouſals and feſtivities. A gallant and martial prince, who delighted in exertions of proweſs and dexterity, was naturally followed in thoſe diverſions by his nobility. Diana de Poitiers, created ducheſs of Valentinois, preſided at theſe entertainments, deſigned in her honour; and the queen, though young and beautiful, though of uncommon capacity, and endowed with diſſimulation, and manners the moſt temporiſing, yet acted only an inferior and ſubſervient part. She had however the ſatisfaction of being crowned at St. Denis, and of making afterwards a triumphal entry with her huſband into the capital: but theſe were only pageantries of ſtate; and Henry, who never admitted her to a participation of his authority, ſeems to have been aware, that her character and genius were more calculated to embroil, than adminiſter any remedy to the affairs of government.

By a tranſition wondrous and inexplicable, if any thing in human nature can be eſteemed ſo, theſe tournaments and entertainments were immediately ſucceeded by exhibitions of a very different nature, but not leſs frequented.—Miſtaken piety, a principle the moſt pernicious, and ever including a ſavage and intemperate zeal which delights in blood, was ſubſtituted in the place of gallantry and pleaſure.

pleaſure. A number of proſelytes to the doctrines of Luther and Calvin were burnt, as an example to their companions. The king and his courtiers were preſent at theſe inhuman ſacrifices, which were performed with a refinement of mercileſs cruelty, and varied in many ſpecies: but it is ſaid he was ſo affected by the dreadful cries of one of his valets de chambre, at whoſe execution he attended, that he quitted the place, overcome with horror; and, during his whole remaining life, ſo ſtrongly were the torments imprinted on his imagination, that he trembled at the recollection, and was ſeized with remorſe of the moſt poignant nature.

Margaret of Valois, queen of Navarre, died, nearly about this time, at the caſtle of Odos in Bigorre. She had never recovered the affecting news of her beloved brother's death. If Francis the firſt was the greateſt monarch of his age, Margaret was indiſputably the moſt accompliſhed princeſs. Devoted to the love of letters, ſhe encouraged and patronized their authors; from whom ſhe received the flattering epithets of, "the Tenth "Muſe," and "the Fourth Grace." Herſelf an author, ſhe has left us proofs the moſt inconteſtible of her elegant genius, her wit, and negligent ſtyle, full of beauty. Suſpected of Hugonotiſm, ſhe was ſuſpected of gallantry likewiſe; and perhaps might have been equally

equally ſenſible in turn to thoſe grand movements of elevated minds, devotion and love. Her tales, ſcarce inferior to thoſe of Boccacio, ſeem to confirm this ſentiment; and though they ever inculcate and commend the virtues of chaſtity and female fidelity, yet contain in certain parts an animation, and warmth of colouring, which give room to ſuppoſe the writer of them fully ſenſible to the delights of the paſſion ſhe cenſured and condemned *.

Boulogne,

* Bonnivet, preſuming on his perſonal attractions concealed himſelf under her bed, and attempted to violate her honour. She repulſed him, tore off the ſkin from his face with her nails, and afterwards complained to the king her brother of this daring attempt; but he only laughed at it. She has related this adventure, ſomewhat enigmatically, among her Tales. —— Though ſometimes ſo devout as to compoſe hymns, yet ſhe was certainly an "Eſprit fort;" ſince ſhe had great doubts concerning the immortality of the ſoul. Brantome has preſerved a very curious ſtory relative to the death of one of her maids of honour, at which ſhe was preſent. The queen was much attached to her, and could not be induced by any entreaties to quit her bedſide, when expiring. On the contrary, ſhe continued to fix her eyes on the dying perſon with uncommon eagerneſs and perſeverance, till ſhe had breathed her laſt. The ladies of her court expreſſed to her majeſty their aſtoniſhment and ſurpriſe at this conduct; and requeſted to know, what ſatisfaction ſhe could derive from ſo cloſe an inſpection of the agonies of death? Her anſwer marked a moſt daring and inquiſitive mind. She ſaid, "that having often heard the "moſt learned doctors and eccleſiaſtics aſſert, that on the ex"tinction of the body, the immortal part was ſet at liberty, "and unlooſed; ſhe could not reſtrain her anxious curioſity to "obſerve

Boulogne, long beſieged, was at length ſurrendered to France, from the weakneſſes and diſſentions common to a minority; Edward the ſixth, king of England, being in very early youth, and his uncle the protector's autho-

" obſerve if any ſymptoms or indications of ſuch a ſeparation " were viſible or diſcernible: that none ſuch ſhe had been able " in any degree to diſcover; and that, if ſhe was not happily " very firm in her faith and adherence to the catholic religion, " ſhe ſhould not know what to think of this pretended depar- " ture of the ſoul."

Francis the firſt took a pleaſure in publicly declaring that to her tenderneſs, care, and attentions, he was indebted for his life, during the ſevere illneſs he underwent in his confinement at Madrid. She had the boldneſs and ſpirit to reproach the emperor and his council, in terms the moſt animated, for their unmanly and cruel treatment of the king. It is ſaid, that Charles was ſo much irritated by theſe reprehenſions, which he was conſcious he merited, that he had intended to ſeize on her perſon, and detain her priſoner, if ſhe had outſtayed the time granted her to remain in the Spaniſh dominions. Margaret received intimation of this deſign; and, without being in the leaſt diſmayed, mounted on horſeback, croſſed the provinces between Madrid and France, and arrived on the frontier a very few hours before the expiration of her ſafe-conduct.

She was ſeized, ſays Brantome, with a catarrh, of which ſhe died, while ſhe was intently gazing on a comet, ſuppoſed to predict pope Paul the third's exit. Her illneſs laſted eight days. She ſeems to have had the ſame conſtitutional dread and terror of death, which characteriſed her mother Louiſa. The ladies who attended her announcing to her, when in extremity, that ſhe muſt prepare herſelf for her end, and fix her thoughts on the joys of a celeſtial ſtate; " Tout cela eſt vrai," replied the expiring queen; " mais nous demeurons ſi long " temps en terre avant que venir la."—She was above two years older than Francis the firſt; and fifty-eight at the time of her deceaſe.

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rity precarious and ill eſtabliſhed.—The houſe of Guiſe, firmly united with Diana ducheſs of Valentinois, continued to aggrandiſe itſelf, and gained every year ſome new eſtabliſhment. The genius and great qualities of the duke and cardinal, widely oppoſite, but equally pre-eminent and diſtinguiſhed, eclipſed all other merit: even the conſtable, though ſuperior to any rival in the royal favour, and poſſeſſing unlimited influence, yet could not regard unmoved the rapid progreſs they made in univerſal admiration, and beheld with jealouſy theſe new competitors for fame and glory.

Italy, deſtined during more than half a century to be the principal ſcene of war, again exhibited indications of approaching hoſtilities. The grandſons of the late pontiff Paul the third, againſt whom Julius the third, newly elected, had taken up arms, and endeavoured to diſpoſſeſs them of the duchy of Parma; claimed the protection of Henry, who gladly afforded it to them. He was charmed to find an occaſion for again interfering in the affairs beyond the Alps, and of conſequence renewing his attempts on the Milaneſe, ſo long and ſo unfortunately conteſted by the French. Briſſac was ſent into Piedmont, and inſtructed to aſſiſt the duke of Parma, though without any open denunciation againſt the emperor. Julius, after an ineffectual attempt to induce the

the king to reſign his allies, made as unſucceſsful an effort upon the city, the ſiege of which his general was obliged to raiſe.

Charles, though he had ſcarce paſſed his fiftieth year, was already oppreſſed with all the maladies and infirmities of age. Solyman, his great and conſtant antagoniſt, menaced the Hungarian dominions. He had alarmed all the princes of the empire, by his impriſonment of the landgrave of Heſſe, and his open infringement of the Germanic rights and liberties. Even his brother Ferdinand was juſtly irritated, by his endeavours to compel him to reſign the ſucceſſion of the Imperial crown to Philip prince of Spain, his ſon. — Theſe united conſiderations induced Henry no longer to diſſemble, or delay a rupture with him. Briſſac began the campaign in Piedmont, while Anthony duke of Vendome entered Artois and Hainault. The king ſtrengthened himſelf by a ſecret alliance with Maurice duke of Saxony, head of the proteſtant league; whom he promiſed to aſſiſt with troops and money againſt Charles, who evidently aimed at deſpotiſm.

The effects of this confederacy were ſoon viſible, in the extraordinary and rapid march of Maurice; who had nearly taken the emperor priſoner in Inſpruck, while he amuſed him with propoſals of peace. Charles, terrified, amazed, and on the brink of a ſhameful cap-

tivity, fled in a litter by torch-light over the mountains, meanly accompanied; and ſcarce imagined himſelf in ſecurity at Villach in Carinthia, upon the frontier of the Venetian territories. Henry, improving this favourable juncture, marched in perſon into Lorrain; and having firſt poſſeſſed himſelf of the young duke's perſon, ſeized on the cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which, as depending on the empire, were unapprehenſive of, and unprepared for ſuch an attack. Theſe important acquiſitions have remained unalterably to France.

Previous to his departure, he veſted the regency in the queen, though he at the ſame time almoſt aſſociated with her Bertrandi, keeper of the ſeals, and implicitly devoted to the ducheſs of Valentinois. Catherine, during the ſhort time in which the adminiſtration was entruſted to her, was not guilty of any act injurious to her own character, or the intereſts of ſtate. That complicated and intriguing genius, that perplexed and pernicious policy, thoſe flattering but ruinous artifices, which ſo eminently marked her under the reigns of her three children, were as yet unexerted, or unobſerved. Accommodating, and miſtreſs of her feelings, ſhe bent beneath madame de Valentinois's ſuperior power; and, ſo far from making any efforts to diminiſh

niſh or invalidate it, profeſſed for her the moſt ſtrict and diſintereſted friendſhip.

Maurice's ſucceſs and maſterly conduct ſoon reduced the emperor to a neceſſity of complying with his offers of peace: and a treaty was ſigned, which for ever guaranteed and ſecured the independence of the German princes, eccleſiaſtical and civil. Charles haſtened, and gladly accepted theſe overtures, from the deſire of revenge on the king of France. The inſult and indignity offered him, in the full zenith of his proſperity, by the capture of three great cities under the Imperial protection, ſtung him with the acuteſt ſenſations; and, liſtening only to his anger, he levied a prodigious army, in the reſolution of laying immediate ſiege to Metz. The ſeaſon was already far advanced, and it was on the eighteenth day of October when he commenced his attack of it. As the place was however of vaſt circuit, and ſurrounded with fortifications weak and ruinous, he would probably have rendered himſelf maſter of it, if the uncommon exertion of military ſkill and virtue in the duke of Guiſe had not fruſtrated his efforts. This great prince, endowed with every talent of a courtier and a warrior, had thrown himſelf into it; and withſtood the emperor's aſſaults with undiſmayed intrepidity, and unſhaken perſeverance. Winter, accompanied with ſnows and the rigours of

cold, aided his valour, and conduced to deſtroy the Imperial forces. On the firſt of January Charles diſlodged, after having loſt thirty thouſand ſoldiers, and began his retreat—if ſuch it could be denominated. That acroſs the Alps, after the unfortunate campaign of Provence, was infinitely leſs diſaſtrous and miſerable than the preſent: and the duke of Guiſe's humanity and care towards the numbers of unhappy wretches who fell into his hands, from the incapacity of accompanying their commander in his flight, ſhone as conſpicuouſly as his courage had done during the ſiege, and rendered his fame immortal.

In Piedmont the war was feebly ſupported between Briſſac and Ferdinand de Gonzague. Solyman, the firm ally of Henry, as he had been of Francis, aided him with his fleets; and by intrigue he gained poſſeſſion of Sienna; a place which, had it been preſerved, would have aided and facilitated, in the greateſt degree, any attempts on the Milaneſe, or the kingdom of Naples.

The Spring ſaw the emperor again in the field. Animated with ſhame, and anxious to repair his paſt defeats, he re-entered France. Terouenne, which reſiſted his attacks, firſt felt the weight of his vengeance. He took, and utterly demoliſhed it: Francis de Montmorenci, the conſtable's eldeſt ſon, who had gallantly

gallantly defended it, remained a priſoner. Emanuel Philibert, the young duke of Savoy, commanded Charles's forces, and began already to diſplay that heroiſm and martial capacity, which afterwards ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed him. He beſieged Heſdin, which capitulated; but while the articles were under agitation, a grenade thrown by a prieſt into the town, ſet fire to a mine, under the ruins of which, Horace Farneſe, duke of Caſtro, grandſon to Paul the third, and who had married Diana *, the king's natural daughter, was deſtroyed with fifty others. — On the other hand, the conſtable, to whom Henry had committed all his army, performed ſcarce any exploits worthy an enumeration; and his illneſs, which followed, put an end to the campaign, and carried his troops into winter quarters.

The death of young Edward, king of England, interrupted the harmony between the two crowns. Mary, who ſucceeded, in oppoſition equally to the wiſhes of her people,

* She was one of the moſt amiable, accompliſhed, and beautiful princeſſes who have appeared in France. Her mother's name was Philippa Duc, of Montcaillier in Piedmont. She was infinitely dear to Henry her father, and not leſs ſo to the three ſucceeding kings her brothers. When left a widow by the duke of Caſtro's death, ſhe was only fourteen years old. Her name occurs frequently in the narration of Henry the third's life and reign.

and of Henry, eſpouſed Philip, the emperor's ſon. This union, as it encreaſed the influence and power of Charles's houſe, was little calculated to diminiſh the king of France's jealouſy, or accelerate a peace. On the contrary, both ſides prepared anew for war. The emperor, though diſabled by the gout, which had contracted the ſinews of one of his legs, and rendered him incapable of uſing an arm, appeared once more in the field. Henry, who had ever ſtudiouſly ſought the occaſion of combating in perſon his great antagoniſt, endeavoured to provoke him to a general engagement. He ravaged Hainault, Brabant, and the Cambreſis; demoliſhed Mariemont, a palace of pleaſure belonging to Mary queen of Hungary, and governeſs of the Low Countries; and razed the magnificent caſtle of Bins, which ſhe had lately erected.—Charles marched to the relief of Renty, beſieged by the French; and a rude ſkirmiſh enſued, in which the Imperial forces were obliged to retreat, after a conſiderable loſs of men and artillery. The place reſiſted notwithſtanding; and the king, leaving part of his army to the duke of Vendome, diſmiſſed the remainder, and returned to Paris. Some inconſiderable conqueſts which Charles effected, terminated his military exploits, and put an end to all his campaigns.

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In Italy, Sienna was loſt, after a long and obſtinate defence againſt the Spaniards, but Briſſac maintained the national honour in Piedmont, though ill ſupported by the court, and oppoſed by the duke of Alva, who vainly and impotently menaced to drive him over the mountains. This gallant commander would even have relieved Sienna, and forced the enemy to raiſe the ſiege, if the oppoſition of Montmorenci and the Guiſes, jealous of his glory, had not fruſtrated his intentions. Mary, queen of England, attempted to mediate an accommodation between the contending princes, and a congreſs was held in a ſplendid tent near Calais for that purpoſe; but it produced no beneficial conſequences.

The death of Henry d'Albret, king of Navarre, who expired at Hagetmau, in Bearn, left his crown and little dominions expoſed to the ſeizure of the French monarch; but the diligence of Anthony duke of Vendome, who had married Jane, heireſs to the kingdom, preſerved it entire. The king, who had intended to re-unite this ſmall domain to France, by a donation of other lands to Anthony, was highly offended at his conduct; and refuſing the government of Picardy to his brother Louis, prince of Condé, conferred it on Coligny.

The emperor, chagrined and mortified at the decline of his luſtre, and the ſucceſſes of Henry; oppreſſed with diſeaſes, and perhaps tinctured with ſome of his mother's * more deplorable and remedileſs diſorders; determined to reſign all his vaſt poſſeſſions to Philip his ſon. He executed this extraordinary renunciation at Bruſſels, with the reſerve of the imperial dignity, which he retained a year longer.

The profuſion and magnificence of the court, ſuperadded to the wars ſuſtained againſt enemies ſo powerful, rendered it neceſſary to encreaſe the revenues, by additional taxes, burdenſome and oppreſſive to the people. Madam de Valentinois was chiefly accuſed as the ſource of theſe exactions. So far was her influence from any decline, that every year confirmed and extended it. Henry, flexible and eaſily led by thoſe he loved, only acted through his miſtreſſes.—She erected the ſu-

* This miſerable princeſs only finiſhed her life ſix months before the emperor's abdication. She ſurvived her huſband, the archduke Philip, forty-nine years, and was above ſeventy at her own deceaſe. Her attachment to him, and his untimely death, chiefly contributed to deprive her of her intellects. She was ſhut up in the caſtle of Tordeſillas, almoſt abandoned, ſleeping upon ſtraw, which ſhe ſometimes wanted. Her only recreation was to fight with cats, and to crawl up the tapeſtry with which her apartments were hung. Such was the lamentable deſtiny of Ferdinand and Iſabella's daughter; of the mother of two emperors, and four queens

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perb palace of Anet *, to which the two lovers frequently retired, and which was the chief ſcene of their amorous pleaſures. Unable to account for ſo wondrous and unexampled an attachment, in perſons of ſuch unequal ages, the nation attributed it to ſorcery, and ſupernatural cauſes. It was reported, that the ducheſs wore magical rings, which equally prevented the decay and diminution of her own beauty, or of the monarch's paſſion.—Catherine of Medicis ſupported and confirmed this abſurd aſſertion, which ſoothed her vanity, by accounting for her rival's triumph §..

* Anet yet exhibits the remains of ſplendor and elegance. It is ſituated near Dreux, in the Iſle of France. The emblems and devices of the ducheſs of Valentinois are viſible in every part of the building. Voltaire has immortalized it, in theſe beautiful lines of the ninth canto of his Henriade. Love is deſcribed as on his way to the plane of Ivry.

" Il voit les murs d'Anet batis aux bords de l'Eure
" Lui-meme en ordonna la ſuperbe ſtructure;
" Par ſes adroites Mains, avec art enlacés;
" Les Chiffres de Diane y ſont encore tracés;
" Sur ſa tombe, en paſſant, les plaiſirs et les graces
" Repandirent les fleurs qui naiſſoient ſur leurs traces."

§ Monſieur de Thou, though ſo judicious and able an hiſtorian, was not ſuperior to this weakneſs, characteriſtic of the age in which he lived; and very gravely mentions as a fact, the magic powers of which Diana availed herſelf, to perpetuate and ſupport her aſcendancy over Henry.——Brantome knew her perſonally, and has given a minute deſcription of her beauty,

The death of pope Julius the third, and the election of Paul the fourth to the pontifical chair, gave another face to the affairs of Italy. The new pontiff, though more than eighty years of age, and of manners the moſt auſtere, no ſooner attained his new dignity, than aſſuming a conduct the reverſe of that which he had held, he joined a luxury and pomp hitherto unexampled, to projects of the moſt irregular ambition. Irritated by his nephews againſt the emperor, for ſome pretended infractions of which his generals had been guilty, and inflamed with impotent reſentment, he demanded the protection of France, offered the inveſtiture of Naples to

beauty, in its moſt advanced period. The paſſage is too curious and extraordinary to paſs over.

" I ſaw that lady," ſays he, " only ſix months before ſhe " died. She was ſo lovely at that time, that the moſt inſenſi- " ble perſon could not have regarded her without emotion. " She was then on her recovery from a very ſevere indiſpoſiti- " on, conſequent to a fracture of her leg, which ſhe had broke " by a fall from her horſe, in riding through the ſtreets of Or- " leans. Yet neither the accident, nor the intenſe pain ſhe " underwent from it, had in any degree diminiſhed her " charms."

Though Brantome does not abſolutely account for this unparalleled beauty, by any magic influence, yet he endeavours to explain the cauſe of it, by ſomewhat ſimilar means.—" Mais, " on dit bien," adds he, " que tous les matins elle uſoit " de quelques bouillons compoſez d'or potable, et autres " drogues que je ne ſçai pas."—At the period of life when he ſpeaks of the ducheſs in theſe terms, ſhe was full ſixty-five years old.

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the king, and endeavoured to negociate a ſtrict alliance for their mutual advantage. — The wiſeſt and moſt diſintereſted of the council were averſe to theſe dangerous and chimerical propoſitions. They foreſaw only diſgrace and ruin, in the renewal of the antiquated and remote pretenſions on the crown of Naples; they knew no confidence ought to be repoſed on the honour or engagements of Italian politicians, of a man ſinking under the weight of extreme old age, and actuated by two perfidious and violent nephews. They conſidered the ſtate of the kingdom, exhauſted by her long and inceſſant wars with the emperor, and beholding future ones in proſpect againſt Philip his ſon. They recalled to mind the numerous and unfortunate attempts under Louis the twelfth, and Francis the firſt, upon the Neapolitan dominions. — Theſe conſiderations ſo truly weighty, ought to have prevented any union or connection with the court of Rome; but the ſubſerviency of all the cabinet to the duke of Guiſe and his brother, precluded ſo ſalutary an advice from Henry's ear. The cardinal of Lorrain, eloquent, impetuous, and vain, embraced the papal overtures with his accuſtomed enthuſiaſm, in the intention of placing the duke at the head of the armies deſtined againſt Italy. He was immediately diſpatched in perſon to ratify and conclude the treaty; but during his

his abſence, by the intervention of the queen of England, a truce was agreed on for five years between the emperor and France.

To reſcind and violate this ſuſpenſion of hoſtilities, the cardinal Caraffa was ſent, on the part of his uncle the pope, to Paris, with a ſuperb train. He ſaluted the king at Fontainbleau, preſented his majeſty a hat and ſword, bleſſed by the ſovereign pontiff, and made a magnificent entry into the capital. Intriguing and artful, he moved every ſpring, and availed himſelf of every means. Catherine and Diana were both rendered ſubſervient to his views. Flattery, preſents, vanity, ambition, were by turns exerted or extended to gain their ſuffrages. Henry, irreſolute, unwilling, and after long heſitation, in contradiction to the dictates of his own judgment, ſuffering himſelf to be borne away by the torrent, conſented to the league.

Francis duke of Guiſe, nominated to the ſupreme command, paſſed the mountains, carrying with him the flower of the nobility, whom the ſplendor of his character, illuſtrious for courteſy, courage, and liberality, allured to follow him. None of the Italian powers could be induced to afford him aſſiſtance. The pope received him with every mark of external ſatisfaction, and celebrated his arrival by public feſtivities and honours; but neither the pecuniary or military aids he had promiſed, were ready.

ready. The duke of Alva, with an army, ravaged the territories of the Church; and the French commander, after an unſucceſsful attempt upon the frontier of Naples, was neceſſitated to return for the protection of his allies. —No progreſs was made, no conqueſts atchieved; and every thing ſeemed to portend a termination inglorious and ignominious to his arms, when an event equally diſaſtrous and unexpected to the kingdom, recalled him from this critical ſituation, and extricated him from ſo perilous a condition.

Charles, who for near half a century had ſpread terror through Europe, no longer acted upon the great political theatre; retired to the monaſtery of St. Juſtus in Eſtremadoura, he was forgotten while yet alive.—Philip, leſs courageous, but not leſs ambitious, aſſiſted by the queen of England, and deſirous on his acceſſion to impreſs the European princes with ideas of his extenſive power, aſſembled a prodigious army; but equally deficient in bravery and the conduct neceſſary to command it, he entruſted that important commiſſion to the young duke of Savoy. The new general, after a number of feints, attacked the town of St. Quentin in Picardy. Coligny had thrown himſelf into it, and his obſtinate valour ſerved as a rampart to the place, otherwiſe ill calculated for defence. The conſtable Montmorenci, his uncle, advanced at the head of his troops, with intent

intent to ſuccour it; but with infinite difficulty did d'Andelot, brother to Coligny, find means to enter with five hundred ſoldiers. This being effected, he would have retired at noonday, and in ſight of the enemy, ſuperior in numbers, and particularly in cavalry. The duke, conſcious of the temerity of the attempt, and ſeizing inſtantly the occaſion, charged the conſtable furiouſly, before he had time to iſſue the neceſſary orders, or draw up his forces. The horſe were routed, and thrown into confuſion; but the infantry ſtood firm, and were almoſt all cut to pieces. Montmorenci himſelf, with a number of inferior commanders, remained a captive.—Philip, who had not in any degree conduced to this great victory, prevented the deciſive effects it might have produced, by his jealouſy of the duke of Savoy. Inſtead of marching without delay to the capital, which was already covered with conſternation, and ready to be left deſart at his approach, he compelled his general to continue the ſiege of St. Quentin; which Coligny yet defended ſome days, and in which he was at length taken priſoner.

Henry meanwhile, in this critical emergency, neglected no meaſures for the ſafety of his dominions. Levies of Germans and Switzers were made with all poſſible expedition; Paris was fortified towards Picardy; the duke of Guiſe recalled to the defence of France; and even

even the moſt preſſing ſolicitations made to Solyman for ſuccour, againſt the Spaniſh monarch. Theſe vigorous efforts were attended with a proportionate ſucceſs. Re-animated by their prince's firmneſs and intrepidity, and recovering from the firſt impreſſions of diſmay, the Pariſians gave the moſt diſtinguiſhed proofs of their loyalty and liberality. The duke of Guiſe's arrival, the luſtre of his name, and reliance upon his great abilities, completed the general tranquillity.—Philip, during the remainder of the campaign, had performed no atchievements, made no acquiſitions proportionate to the importance of the battle he had gained. The capture of Ham, Catelet, and Noyon were feeble advantages, and unattended with any deciſive conſequences.

On the contrary, the duke of Guiſe, though amid the extreme rigours of winter, loſt not a moment to ſuccour the drooping genius of his country. After having been declared lieutenant-general within and without the kingdom, he undertook the ſiege of Calais, deemed almoſt impregnable, and made himſelf maſter of that city, ſo long held by the Engliſh, in eight days, though it had coſt Edward the third above a year's blockade. This ſignal ſucceſs was followed by the capture of Thionville: but the marechal de Termes, although an able and experienced commander, was routed near Gravelines

velines by the young Count d'Egmont; and he himſelf fell into the enemy's hands.

So aſtoniſhing a reverſe of fortune ſerved only to heighten and give additional ſplendor to the reputation of the defender of Metz and conqueror of Calais. He alone, amid the calamities of the ſtate, could command the events of war, and uniformly attach victory to him. On him alone the public confidence reſted, as the protecting guardian of France. By a combination of events uniting to the aggrandiſement of the houſe of Guiſe, their power was ſtill farther confirmed and extended at this juncture, from an alliance which approached them even to the crown.—Francis the dauphin, enamoured of the young queen of Scotland, who had been ſent, after her father's death, to the court of Henry for an aſylum, obtained the king's conſent to his eſpouſals.—Mary, ſo renowned for her beauty, her talents, and her misfortunes, was at this time in her ſixteenth year. Her charms, not yet fully expanded, are yet deſcribed by all the French hiſtorians, as ſo touching and irreſiſtible, that a prince of ſenſibility, however languid, could not fail to pay homage to them. —Their nuptials were ſolemniſed with unuſual luſtre at the church of "Notre Dame," and conſummated the ſame day, at the "Palais," amid the greateſt feſtivities.—A triumphal entry into the city ſucceeded.—The dauphin was on horſeback, the young bride in a magnificent

cent litter. They aſſumed the titles of king and queen of England and Scotland, after the death of Mary, which took place the ſame year. The court was immerſed in all the gallant entertainments and diverſions natural at ſuch a time; and the duke of Guiſe, together with the cardinal of Lorrain, found themſelves at the zenith of glory and authority.

Two vaſt armies, commanded by their reſpective monarchs in perſon, menaced each other on the approach of ſpring. Henry and Philip ſeemed to be on the verge of a deciſive engagement; but mutual dread reſtrained them, and peace, long delayed, at length was concluded. The conſtable, weary of his confinement, anxious for the preſervation of his favour, jealous of the Guiſes, and dreading leſt abſence ſhould efface and obliterate that attachment the king had borne him, requeſted and obtained permiſſion to go to him in perſon, in the deſign of procuring a general pacification. He was received with teſtimonies of the warmeſt affection, and moſt unabated friendſhip, by his maſter; who carried his condeſcenſion and fondneſs to ſo great a pitch, as to make him lie in his own bed. It was determined to put an end to the war, at whatever price, or by whatever ſacrifices. After ſeveral conferences at Cercamp, the preliminaries were finally adjuſted, and ſigned at Cateau in Cambreſis.—All the Italian acquiſitions, gained

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in the late and preſent reign, in Piedmont, Tuſcany, and Corſica, were ceded, to procure the reſtitution of three inconſiderable towns in Picardy.—Calais, Metz, Toul, and Verdun remained to France.—The princeſs Margaret, ſiſter to the king, was affianced to the duke of Savoy; and Iſabella his eldeſt daughter, taken from Don Carlos, Philip's ſon, for whom ſhe was firſt deſigned, and given to Philip himſelf, become a widower by the queen of England's death.

Theſe terms, humiliating and ignominious to France, were attributed to the conſtable; who from intereſted motives, and the deſire of terminating his captivity, had counſelled the king to accept them. The Guiſes loudly decried and arraigned them, as unworthy and unbecoming the national honour, and depriving the kingdom in a moment of the conqueſts of near thirty years; but Henry was immoveable, and adhered to his reſolution.

During the reign of Francis the firſt, and more peculiarly ſo ſince his deceaſe, the reformed religion had made a moſt alarming and univerſal progreſs. All ranks of people had imbibed the new doctrines; and perſecution unhappily being ſuperadded, haſtened and promoted their influence. D'Andelot, nephew to the conſtable, and brother to Coligny, was juſtly ſuſpected, and even accuſed of being a proſelyte to theſe opinions. Henry, deſirous to

to be ſatisfied of the truth or falſhood of the imputation, queſtioned him perſonally, what he thought of the Maſs; and d'Andelot, with imprudent zeal, made him ſo bold and undiſguiſed a reply, that, irritated to a pitch of frantic indignation, he was about to have put him to death with his own hand.—It required all his uncle's intereſt to procure his pardon, and reſtitution to his poſt of colonel in the infantry. The moſt ſevere penalties were denounced againſt the profeſſors of Calviniſm; and ſeveral members of the parliament, having preſumed to declare againſt the rigour of the puniſhments enacted and executed on them, the king himſelf went in perſon, and ordered five of them to be arreſted and carried to the Baſtile immediately, who had avowed that ſentiment in his preſence. Orders were iſſued for their prompt and rigorous proſecution.

With the return of tranquillity and peace, every ſpecies of luxurious diſſipation revived. Henry's court, the moſt effeminate, debauched, and poliſhed in Europe, was rendered unuſually ſplendid by the different entertainments exhibited on occaſion of the marriage of Iſabella to Philip. It was celebrated by proxy at Paris. Tournaments and carouſals added a martial magnificence to the other amuſements of a gentler nature. The duke of Savoy arriving, accompanied by the duke of Brunſwic, the prince of Orange, and a hundred gentlemen,

men, was received with every demonſtration of reſpect and attention by Henry; who met and embraced him at the foot of the great ſtaircaſe of the Louvre. This incident redoubled the feſtivities. Only three days after, they were interrupted by the tragical cataſtrophe of the king's death.

The liſts extended from the palace of the Tournelles to the Baſtile, acroſs the ſtreet St. Antoine. Henry himſelf had broken ſeveral lances with different lords of the court, in all of which he had ſhewn unuſual vigour and addreſs. On that day he wore the colours of his miſtreſs, the ducheſs of Valentinois, in token of his homage, and in compliance with the laws of chivalry, where gallantry was ever mingled. Thoſe colours were black and white, in alluſion to her ſtate of widow-hood.—Towards the cloſe of the evening, and previous to the concluſion of the tournament, he was ſeized with the inclination of trying his proweſs againſt the count de Montgomeri, captain in his guards. He was ſon to that ſeigneur de Lorges, who had wounded Francis the firſt ſo dangerouſly on the head at Romorentin in Berri; and was diſtinguiſhed for his ſuperiority in theſe combats above any nobleman of the kingdom.—Catherine of Medicis, as if by a ſecret preſage of the event, beſought him not to reenter the liſts; Henry reſiſted her ſolicitations; adding, that he would break one more lance in her

her honour. Montgomeri himſelf accepted the defiance with extreme reluctance, and endeavoured by every argument and entreaty to prevail on his ſovereign to excuſe him; but in vain. Henry commanded him to obey. He even fought with his vizor raiſed. The ſhock was rude on both ſides; but the count's lance breaking againſt the king's helmet, he attacked him with the ſtump, which remained in his hand. It entered under the eyebrow of his right eye. The blow was ſo violent, as to tumble him to the ground, and to deprive him inſtantly both of his ſpeech and underſtanding. He never more recovered them, though he ſurvived the accident near eleven days.—The queen ordered him to be carried immediately to the Tournelles: every medical aſſiſtance was procured, and the divine mercy implored by proceſſions and public prayers:—but the wound was beyond a cure; and he at length expired, having only paſſed his fortieth year four months.

Conſternation and affright, mingled with intrigue and artifice, divided the court: and the number of contending factions, headed by chiefs of the higheſt capacity, whom the late king's vigour had reſtrained within ſubjection, now declared their various pretenſions without diſguiſe.—The duke of Savoy, finding his life deſpaired of, ſolicited ſo preſſingly the accompliſhment of his marriage with the princeſs Margaret,

Margaret, that it was celebrated at "Notre-"Dame," without any pomp, and in the greateſt privacy.—The ducheſs of Valentinois received an order from the queen to retire to her own hotel, and not to preſume to enter the chamber of the dying king. She obeyed.—Catherine followed this mandate by a ſecond, enjoining her to deliver up the jewels of the crown, and other rich effects then in her poſſeſſion. She demanded, if Henry was dead; the meſſenger replied, that he yet breathed; but could not poſſibly remain long alive. "Know," ſaid Diana, with undaunted intrepidity, "that ſo long as he ſhall retain the "leaſt appearance of life, I neither fear my "enemies, however powerful, nor will ſhew "any deference to their menaces or com-"mands. Carry this anſwer to the queen."

If Henry was not a great, he was an amiable and accompliſhed prince. Generous to his domeſtics, bounteous to his followers, he was adored by his courtiers and attendants. His converſation was amuſive and lively; his manner of expreſſion eloquent, flowing, and graceful. An affectionate father, a polite and decent huſband, a warm and animated friend, he was, in all the walks of private life, peculiarly an object of reſpect and attachment. Neither deſtitute of capacity or firmneſs, though governed by his miſtreſs, and ſubſervient to favourites, he could exert himſelf on important

tant occaſions, and enforce obedience. Fond of polite letters, as from hereditary right, he encouraged them in his court, where they made a rapid progreſs. In the prime of life, and with ſuch qualities, his death muſt at any time have been conſidered as a loſs to his kingdom;—but in the critical juncture when he expired, it was a calamity of the moſt dreadful nature, replete with future miſeries, with maſſacres, crimes, and civil diſcord. He only could repreſs the daring ſpirit and intemperate zeal of the new religions: he only could reſtrain the intriguing genius of Catherine, and ſet bounds to the wild ambition of the princes of the houſe of Lorrain. His untimely end and the ſucceeding circumſtances of his ſons' reigns, unveiled and gave a looſe to every ſource of public evil and diſtreſs.

By the queen he left a numerous iſſue; four ſons and three daughters. They will be all mentioned frequently hereafter. He never had any children by madame de Valentinois;—but beſides Diana, married to the duke of Caſtro, of whom I have already ſpoken, he left a ſon by a Scotch lady*, named Henry; who was grand prior

* Her name is ſaid to have been Fleming; and ſhe was in the ſervice of Mary queen of Scotland, whom ſhe had accompanied from her own country into France; yet others of the cotemporary writers call her "Mademoiſelle d'Amilton;" and pretend,

or of France, governor of Provence, and admiral of the Levant ſeas.

We are now about to enter on a melancholy period of the French hiſtory. Wars of religion, more ſanguinary, more cruel, more obſtinate and ruinous, than thoſe of Henry the fifth and Edward the third, riſe in awful ſucceſſion under the three laſt princes of the

pretend, that ſhe was related to Mary by blood. They add, that motives of policy and intrigue gave riſe to the connection between this lady and the king.---The Guiſes, jealous of the deſpotic aſcendant which Diana de Poitiers had obtained and preſerved over him, determined to detach him from her; as they found ſhe no longer treated them with her accuſtomed confidence; and that Montmorenci had ſupplanted them in her affections.---To this end, they artfully praiſed "Mademoiſelle "d'Amilton," and extolled her to Henry with extravagant eulogiums. He ſaw and loved her. She did not ſcruple to gratify his paſſion; but their intimacy was concealed, even after ſhe had borne a ſon, with the extremeſt care, to prevent its becoming known to the ducheſs of Valentinois.---Henry d'Angouleme, her ſon, was a generous, brave, and accompliſhed prince, though unhappily led, by the prejudices and madneſs of the times, to be eminently active in the dreadful night of St. Bartholomew.---His death was tragical and ſingular. It happened at Aix in Provence. Philip Altoviti, baron de Caſtelane, was his mortal enemy; Henry entered his houſe, and, after having reproached him with his many acts of malignant hatred towards him, paſſed his ſword through his body. Altoviti expiring, had yet ſufficient force to ſnatch a poniard from the head of the bed on which he fell, with which he ſtabbed Henry in the belly. He did not apprehend his wound to be mortal; but the friar who confeſſed him, announcing to him his deſtiny, he replied, without emotion, "Il ne faut plus perſer à vivre? Eh bien, penſons donc à "mourir!"---He died twenty-four hours afterwards.

race

race of Valois. The bright days of Francis and Henry, the noble and animating conteſts with Charles and Philip, are ſucceeded by inteſtine confuſion, by the ſtandard of rebellion and revolt. The kingdom, inundated with foreign auxiliaries, torn by her own children, drenched in noble blood, becomes a field of contention and deſolation. Catherine, like its evil genius, mingles and embroils all ranks and parties. The ſpirit of civil and religious frenzy ſwallows up and extinguiſhes every ſentiment of humanity, patriotiſm, and even virtue—till at length a ſtranger prince, deſcended from the blood of their ancient kings, appears; and, as if ſent from Heaven to heal the wounds of his bleeding country, reſtores peace, and diffuſes univerſal ſerenity.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

State of the kingdom at the death of Henry the ſecond.—Character of the duke of Guiſe—of the Cardinal of Lorrain—of the king of Navarre—of the prince of Condé.—Catherine of Medicis.—Her character—perſon—political conduct.—Diſgrace of the ducheſs of Valentinois.—Acceſſion of Francis the ſecond.—Power of the Guiſes.—The king's feeble health.—Aſſaſſination of Minard.—Conſpiracy of Amboiſe.—Defeated.—Horrible executions.—The prince of Condé ſuſpected.—Convocation of Fontainbleau.—The king of Navarre and prince of Condé arrive at court.—They are arreſted.—Trial of the latter.—Francis's illneſs.—Condé condemned.—Intrigues and cabals of Catherine de Medicis.—Death of Francis the ſecond.—Circumſtances.—Character.—Funeral.—Arrival of Montmorenci.—Releaſe of Condé.

PREVIOUS to our entry upon this ſhort but unhappy reign, which firſt gave birth to the wars of Calviniſm, and ſaw the ſword of France unſheathed againſt herſelf; it is requiſite to take a view of the great perſonages who will appear upon the ſcene, and behold the elements of future calamities yet latent and concealed, or only faintly unfolding

folding the fatal principles of deſtruction with which they were impregnated. The unforeſeen and ſad cataſtrophe of Henry the ſecond's death, awoke theſe dormant ſeeds, which might otherwiſe have ſlept in tranquillity. That ſuperior and coercive power being removed, that had hitherto over-ruled the many jarring and diſcordant ſpirits with which the court was filled, a tumultuous adminiſtration ſucceeded, precarious in its baſis, uncertain in its duration, and only ſupported by an extraordinary exertion of vigilance, circumſpection, and authority.

Amid the confuſion incident to the deceaſe of the late king, the Guiſes had ſeized upon the perſon of Francis the ſecond, the young ſovereign. Their alliance by blood to the queen, Mary of Scotland, afforded them a plauſible pretext to juſtify their conduct; and the characters of the two brothers, Francis duke of Guiſe and the cardinal of Lorrain, ſeemed to render them intitled to the firſt poſts of ſtate.

The former poſſeſſed eminently all thoſe dazzling qualities which are formed to procure an unlimited aſcendancy over mankind. Liberal even to munificence, courteous to condeſcenſion in his manners and addreſs, he captivated the multitude. His renown in arms procured him the adoration of the ſoldiery, and attachment of the braveſt captains, who deem-

ed themſelves certain of ſucceſs under his auſpices. Naturally moderate, equitable, and averſe to cruelty, he yet zealouſly maintained the ancient religion, and oppoſed every innovation. Intrepid in the article of danger, either perſonal or political, he ſurveyed it without trouble or diſmay, and applied to it the moſt prompt and efficacious remedies. Conſcious of his own capacities for government, favoured by the peculiar circumſtances of the times, and hurried away by his ambition, he gave the reins to his paſſion, and ſet no limits to his thirſt of power.

Talents of an oppoſite nature, but no leſs ſeductive and impoſing, characteriſed his brother the cardinal. Eloquent, and animated with unbounded zeal in the cauſe of the catholic religion, he was venerated by the clergy, as the guardian of the eccleſiaſtical immunities and Privileges. Inferior to the duke in clemency and tempered courage, he was more enterprizing, preſumptuous, and vain. Elated to arrogance with ſucceſs, he ſunk into puſillanimity and unmanly terror, when oppreſſed by adverſe fortune. Violent, iraſcible, and vindictive, he could not reſtrain or diſſemble his feelings. Diſſolute, and fond of pleaſure, he gave offence by the libertiniſm of his conduct. Greedy of power, rapacious of wealth, ſacrificing every meaner conſideration of tenderneſs or affection

fection to the dictates of a ſtern and unrelenting policy, he knew no movements, nor purſued any objects, except thoſe of elevation and aggrandiſement.

Anthony, king of Navarre, firſt prince of the blood, was ill calculated to oppoſe theſe aſpiring and turbulent ſpirits. Of a temper gentle, humane, and flexible, nature ſeemed to have deſigned him for times of harmony and tranquillity. Equal to the duke of Guiſe in perſonal bravery, he was far beneath him in every other point of competition. Politically timid, inconſtant, irreſolute, he wanted that firmneſs ſo indiſpenſable in great emergencies. Fluctuating in endleſs uncertainty between the two religions, he neither could be deemed a Catholic or Hugonot. Voluptuous, and fond of women, he was eaſily induced to break his conventions of policy, in the weakneſs of private attachment.

Far other was his brother the prince of Condé. His perſon little and ungraceful, incloſed a ſoul the moſt heroic. Amorous from complexion, and of an addreſs the moſt perſuaſive, he was beloved by women, and received from them proofs of their affection the moſt unbounded and intoxicating. Of high and determined courage, he was formed to ſhine in camps as much as courts. Indigent in his fortunes almoſt to penury, he had yet the liberality becoming his high birth. Profeſſing with

zeal the doctrines of Calvin, but little inclined to the rigorous manners of the reformation, he made religion the pretext of thoſe wars, which ambition, and hatred to the Guiſes, really produced. Not inferior to the celebrated Charles of Bourbon in the arts of retaining a licentious ſoldiery in ſubjection, nature had intended him for war, and veſted him with all their capacities for the attainment of military glory. With qualities ſuch as I have deſcribed, he formed no unequal antagoniſt to the duke of Guiſe; whom he ever conſidered as his mortal enemy, and boldly oppoſed on all occaſions.

The conſtable Montmorenci, long accuſtomed to occupy the firſt poſt of ſtate, and too haughty to fill an inferior one, did not at once declare for either faction; but the preſſing inſtances of Henry d'Amville his ſecond ſon, and his natural averſion to Hugonotiſm, induced him at length to join the princes of the houſe of Lorrain.

The marechal de St. André, one of the moſt accompliſhed noblemen of the court, brave, polite, and elegant, but immerſed in pleaſures, and ruined by his debts, ranged himſelf under the ſame banner, and devoted himſelf implicitly to the duke of Guiſe's ſervice.——On the contrary, Coligni, and d'Andelot his brother, both avowed proſelytes to Calviniſm, embraced the party of the princes of the blood, and adhered to it invariably.

Catherine

Catherine of Medicis, whom we have ſo long beheld obſcured by the ſuperior influence of the two ſucceſſive miſtreſſes to Francis and Henry, now firſt came forward, and roſe into importance. Her rank, as mother to the young king, made her friendſhip eagerly ſought by every party. Her talents and capacity rendered her equal to, and capable of the moſt arduous offices of government. A character too complicated, and containing movements too numerous and intricate for a common deſcription, I ſcarce dare to attempt this difficult picture.

Endowed by nature with a thouſand qualities great and ſhining, ſhe only wanted virtue to direct them to honourable and ſolutary ends. Fond of pleaſure, of letters, of magnificence, theſe were yet only inferior movements: ambition predominated, and ſwallowed up all other paſſions in her boſom. Born with a force of mind, a calmneſs and ſelf-poſſeſſion which might have done honour to the boldeſt man, ſhe ſeemed to look down as from an eminence on human occurrences. Never alarmed even in circumſtances the moſt unexpected and diſtreſsful, ſhe knew how to bend and accommodate herſelf to them. Of conſummate diſſimulation, her manners, where ſhe wiſhed to ſucceed in any attempt, were ingratiating beyond the powers of female ſeduction. Sprung from the blood of Coſmo de Medicis, and emulative

of the fame which Francis the firſt had acquired by his protection of learning, ſhe cultivated poetry, and all the humanizing arts, amid the horrors of civil war; and extended her generoſity to men of genius, even in the moſt exhauſted ſtate of the finances. — Expenſive even to prodigality in the entertainments and diverſions ſhe exhibited, and covering her deſigns under the deceitful maſk of diſſipation, ſhe planned a maſſacre amid the feſtivities of a banquet, and careſſed with the moſt winning blandiſhments the victim ſhe had deſtined to deſtruction. Cruel from policy, not from temper, avaricious from neceſſity, profuſe from taſte, ſhe united in herſelf qualities the moſt diſcordant and contradictory.

Her perſon was noble, and correſponded with her dignity: the beauty of her countenance blended with majeſty. She knew how to improve her natural charms by all the magic of dreſs, and carried her magnificence on this article to a prodigious length. Expert in every exerciſe of the body, ſhe ſhone equally diſtinguiſhed in the dance, and in the chace. Her attractions were not fugitive and frail, but accompanied her even into age, and hardly quitted her in her moſt advanced period of life *.

Theſe

* Her complexion was unuſually fine, her eyes large, full of vivacity and fire. She had, when young, a faultleſs ſhape; but

Theſe are only faint and imperfect outlines of a portraite, which muſt be known by ſtudy, not deſcription; and which the events of the three ſucceeding reigns will afford me continual opportunity to retouch and correct.

While Henry, mortally wounded, lay expiring, Catherine, though externally agitated with the deepeſt ſorrow, yet provident of futurity, and foreſeeing the natural conſequence of her ſon's acceſſion, heſitated in ſuſpence what meaſures to embrace. Though ſhe dreaded the capacity, the ambition, the influence of the Guiſes, yet the conſtable was more perſonally and immediately obnoxious to her. He had

but grew afterwards large and corpulent. Her head was diſproportionately big; nor could ſhe walk any conſiderable diſtance, without being ſubject to a dizzineſs and ſwimming. The extreme ſymmetry and admirable ſhape of her legs, made her take a particular pleaſure in wearing ſilk ſtockings drawn very tight, the uſe of which were firſt introduced in her time; and the deſire of ſhewing them more conſpicuouſly, induced her to change the mode of riding on horſeback, which was by reſting the feet on a ſmall board, to that of placing one leg upon the pommel of the ſaddle.—Catherine piqued herſelf on the addreſs with which ſhe rode; and though by her boldneſs in hunting ſhe once broke a leg, and at another time received ſo ſevere a blow on the head, as to be obliged to undergo the trepan, ſhe continued this exerciſe to her ſixtieth year. Her hands and arms excelled any lady's of the court, both as to form and whiteneſs.—All habits became her, from the refined taſte with which ſhe adjuſted every ornament to her figure; and her wardrobe was equally varied and ſplendid. Her neck and breaſt were of the moſt matchleſs and dazzling white. Brantome ſpeaks of them with enthuſiaſtic praiſe and pleaſure.

lately united himſelf cloſely with madame de Valentinois; and had likewiſe ſtarted ſuſpicions the moſt injurious to her honour and fidelity, by aſſerting, that of all the children which ſhe had brought her huſband, not one reſembled him. On the contrary, the princes of Lorrain courted her friendſhip, and promiſed her the ſacrifice of the late king's miſtreſs, as the cement of their common union. This tempting condition, ſo grateful to a woman's vengeance, determined the queen. Diana, abandoned by the croud of paraſites and courtiers, who had ſurrounded her in Henry's reign, underwent in turn the humiliation of the ducheſs of Eſtampes; and retired immediately from a theatre, where her preſence was grown hateful, and her power become extinct. She ſpent the remainder of her days at Anet: and Catherine, ſatisfied with a political victory, and repreſſing, from regard to her huſband's memory, any further purſuit, permitted her to retain all the ſplendid donations ſhe had gained from the bounty of her lover, without diminution *.

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* It cannot be denied that the queen acted with the higheſt magnanimity and clemency on this occaſion; ſhe might have taken a bloody and exemplary revenge on her hateful rival. The Marechal de Tavannes offered to cut off her noſe; but Catherine would not permit or conſent to it. The Guiſes, though intimately connected with her, and though principally indebted to her for their elevation and favour, yet were ſo baſe as to become her open enemies on Henry's death.—The cardi-

nal

The young king, Francis the ſecond, who aſcended the throne, was only ſixteen years and ſix months old. A weakneſs both corporal and intellectual, approaching to debility, incapacitated him, even more than his unripe age, for the conduct of ſtate affairs. Merely actuated by his mother, and by the two princes, uncles to the queen conſort; he had neither judgment or paſſions to direct himſelf, or withſtand their advice and ſuggeſtions.—When the deputies of the parliament waited on him, to expreſs their devotion and duties, he therefore informed them, that he had thought proper to inveſt the duke and cardinal with the ſupreme adminiſtration, aſſigning to the former the military department, and the finances to the latter.

The conſtable, who early ſaw this inevitable triumph of his enemies, had advertiſed the king of Navarre, and beſought him to repair immediately to court, and claim the authority to which his high rank and birth eminently entitled him; but Anthony, ſlow, incapable of a

nal of Lorrain would have been her bittereſt proſecutor, if his brother the duke of Aumale, who had married her daughter, had not reſtrained, and reminded him, "That it would cover "himſelf with infamy, to become the executioner of his mo- "ther-in-law."—The conſtable would not deſert her, from reſpect to the memory of his benefactor Henry the ſecond, though urged to that purpoſe.—Diana expreſſed her gratitude to the queen, by a preſent of the ſuperb palace of Chaumont, ſituated in the midſt of thoſe lands aſſigned her for dowry; and received from her in return the caſtle of Chenonceaux.

bold

bold and deciſive reſolution, and diſtruſtful of Montmorenci's attachment, advanced by ſhort journies, and ſtopt at Vendome. This ill-judged and tardy conduct, gave the Guiſes time to confirm their acquiſition, and ſtrengthen their power. Montmorenci, remanded into a ſecond exile, was ordered to retire to his own houſe. The cardinal of Tournon was recalled, and admitted to an apparent aſſociation in the government. Bertrandi, to whom Diana de Poitiers had cauſed the ſeals to be entruſted, was diſmiſſed; and Olivier, a man renowned for probity and honour, created chancellor.

Meanwhile Anthony, ſtimulated by his brother the prince of Condé, arrived at length. His reception was cold even to indignity: the lodging aſſigned him was unworthy his quality, and he would have remained deſtitute of any, if the marechal de St. André had not lent him the one he occupied. When preſented to the new king, Francis made him the ſame declaration he had already done to his parliament. His friends ſtill exhorted him to remain unſhaken, and wait the opportunity of regaining his intereſt and credit: but the Guiſes acting on his terrors, by indirect menaces of the king of Spain's reſentment, if he preſumed to controvert the queen mother's or her ſon's choice of miniſters; and Catherine, on the other hand, alluring him with a promiſe of procuring the reſtitution of his ancient kingdom of Navarre,

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he ſubmitted. After the ceremony of the coronation, he was ſent to conduct the young queen Iſabella to her huſband, Philip the ſecond.

Conſcious of the precarious foundation on which their authority reſted, and dreading ſome attempt upon it, the new miniſters publiſhed an edict, forbidding to carry fire-arms, or even any dreſs favourable to the concealment of ſuch weapons. This order calculated for their perſonal ſafety, and indicative of diſtruſt and terror, was followed by a ſecond, which their intereſt dictated. The king declared, that he would permit no perſon to hold two poſts at the ſame time. Coligni, who to the high charge of admiral, joined the government of Picardy, reſigned chearfully the latter, in the expectation that it would be conferred on the prince of Condé; but Briſſac, recalled from his command in Piedmont, was inveſted with it. The conſtable reluctantly, and after many delays, laid down his office of grand maſter of the houſhold, beſtowed on him by his late ſovereign's bounty; and the duke of Guiſe ſucceeded to it.

Animated by an intemperate zeal, the miniſters perſuaded their weak prince, that he only adhered to his father's maxims and conduct, in commencing a proſecution againſt the Hugonots. Courts of eccleſiaſtical judicature, armed with inquiſitorial powers, were erected, which took cognizance of hereſy; they were denominated

denominated the "Chambres ardentes," from the ſeverity of the puniſhments they inflicted. The moſt rigorous ſearch was made to diſcover offenders; crimes of the moſt improbable and flagitious nature imputed to them, in their nocturnal aſſemblies; and a death accompanied with ignominy, heightened by cruelty, was decreed for their adherence to Calviniſm. It was not confined to the capital. The provinces imitated the example; and theſe unhappy people, forced into oppoſition, and emboldened by religious deſpair, began to attempt a defence againſt their oppreſſors.

The prodigious number of troops diſbanded in conſequence of the late peace; the ſwarms of military adventurers whom the ceſſion of the Luxembourg and Piedmont left unemployed, added to the ſources of inteſtine commotion, and diſcloſed to the Calviniſts the means of raiſing forces in caſe of neceſſity. The court was crouded with ſoldiers of fortune, who importunately demanded ſome recompence for their ſervices. The cardinal of Lorrain, to whom they principally addreſſed their petitions, unable to ſatisfy them, and apprehenſive of ſome conſpiracy in this multitude, publiſhed a raſh edict, which commanded every perſon, who had any favour to aſk of the king, inſtantly to withdraw themſelves, on pain of being hung up on a gibbet, which was erected for that purpoſe in the public ſquare. A treatment

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ſo unworthy and unprecedented, irritated extremely all thoſe againſt whom it was directed, and alienated from him and the duke many brave officers, who were before devotedly attached to the houſe of Guiſe.

Francis's health meanwhile, debilitated and enfeebled by diſtempers, gave alarming tokens of decay. A quartan ague, with which he had been indiſpoſed during ſeveral months, totally incapacitated him for any application to buſineſs of ſtate. When this diſorder left him his face was covered with puſtules, which evinced the malignant nature of his humours. He was therefore carried to Blois, in hopes of benefit from the change of air. The uſual methods practiſed to diminiſh or abate the acrimony of ſcorbutic habits, were tried. A report prevailed, and even was univerſally credited in the environs of Blois, that the blood of infants was procured, to make him a bath. The ſame had been aſſerted of Louis the eleventh, in his laſt illneſs, though probably without foundation. From the remedies adminiſtered, of whatever kind, he however derived ſome temporary benefit and relief.

Meanwhile the ſeverities againſt the profeſſors of the Reformed religion were redoubled at Paris. Anne du Bourg, one of the five members of the parliament, whom Henry the ſecond had committed to the Baſtile a few weeks before his death, was tried; and continuing

nuing pertinaciouſly in his opinions, was capitally condemned. His execution was accelerated by the aſſaſſination of the preſident Minard, one of his judges; to whom he had peculiarly objected, and who had been zealouſly active in the ſeizure and conviction of the Calviniſts. The authors of this crime were never diſcovered. Robert Stuart, a native of Scotland, and who was afterwards in the battle of St. Denis, where he mortally wounded the conſtable, was ſuſpected and ſeized. He claimed the young queen's protection, to whom he declared himſelf related by blood. Mary diſowned his alliance, and would extend no mark of favour towards him. Stuart found reſources in his own firmneſs and intrepidity: he underwent the moſt excruciating pains of torture without any confeſſion; and was therefore abſolved and diſmiſſed.

Puſhed to reſolutions of the moſt deſperate nature, by the ill-judged tyranny of their perſecutors, and oppoſing the undaunted ſpirit of religious conviction, to the ſuperior power of their enemies, the Calviniſts began ſecretly to unite for their common preſervation. Neither Louis prince of Condé, nor Coligni, though notoriouſly proſelytes to the new opinions, had yet declared themſelves their chieftains. A gentleman of Angoumois, named John de Bary la Renaudie, was commiſſioned, notwithſtanding, by the principal perſons among

among them, to collect a number under proper leaders, who, by different roads, ſhould meet at Blois; and, having preſented a petition to the king, ſhould ſeize on the perſons of the duke of Guiſe and cardinal of Lorrain, as enemies to the kingdom and public tranquillity. The ſecret, ill kept, was divulged, and information ſent of the conſpirators' intentions, to court, from many quarters. The Guiſes, warned of the coming ſtorm, took every meaſure neceſſary to avert it. Francis was removed from Blois to the caſtle of Amboiſe, as more tenable, and capable of defence. He iſſued letters, commanding the prince of Condé's and admiral's attendance; who obeyed. The duke's title of lieutenant-general of the kingdom was confirmed; bodies of ſoldiery were ſtationed on all the ſurrounding roads; and a company of muſqueteers, mounted on horſeback, was raiſed to guard the perſon of the king.

Notwithſtanding theſe judicious and maſterly precautions, the conſpirators, in ſmall bands, and marching only during the night, appeared at the gates of Amboiſe, unexpectedly. The cardinal of Lorrain, terrified at this approach of danger, betrayed the timidity which was natural to him; but his brother the duke, undiſmayed, and maſter of himſelf, inſtantly prepared to meet it with courage. His cool diſcernment appeared eminently conſpicuous in this

this hour of trial. He aſſembled the guards, the nobility, and inhabitants. Cautious, and ſuſpecting the prince of Condé, he gave him the poſt of one of the gates to defend; but took care to accompany him with the grand-prior, one of his own brothers, who watched all his movements, and prevented him from lending the moſt indirect aſſiſtance.

The Calviniſts were diſperſed, taken, or cut in pieces. La Renaudie, with a few aſſociates, was met in the foreſt of Chateau-Renaud by the baron de Pardillan, at the head of two hundred cavalry. He defended himſelf, notwithſtanding the diſparity of numbers, with a bravery heightened by deſpair. His followers being almoſt all ſlain, and no chance remaining either of victory or retreat, he ſpurred his horſe up to Pardillan, and thruſting his poniard through his vizor, laid him dead upon the ground. He himſelf fell ſoon after by a ball from a harquebuſſe. When killed, his body was brought to Amboiſe, and hung during ſome hours on a gallows erected upon the bridges.—All the inferior perſons who fell, were treated with the ſame ignominy. Their bodies, dragged at the tails of the horſes, were afterwards placed on iron hooks round the walls of the caſtle, completely habited, booted, and ſpurred.

Some clemency might yet have been ſhewn towards the chiefs. Olivier, the chancellor,

cellor, warmly adviſed lenient and conciliating meaſures. Even the Guiſes hung in ſuſpence whether to pardon or puniſh; when a new, but impotent attempt to ſurpriſe the town, gave a looſe to the laſt ſeverity. All who were taken in arms, even though on their return home, were put to death. A number not leſs than twelve hundred expired under the executioner's hands. The ſtreets of Amboiſe ran purple with blood; the Loire was covered with floating carcaſes; and the public ſquares were crowded with gibbets, on which hung theſe unhappy wretches, who infected the air with a peſtilential ſmell.

The principal leaders were laſt led out to die. The queen-mother, with her three young ſons, and all the principal ladies of the court, beheld this horrid ſpectacle from the windows, as a diverſion. Two of them, under the agony of the Queſtion, accuſed the prince of Condé as their accomplice, though concealed; but the baron de Caſtelnau, confronted with them, denied it highly, and in the moment previous to his head being ſevered from his body, atteſted and confirmed the prince's innocence.

Some ſuſpicions remaining againſt him, notwithſtanding theſe favourable depoſitions, he demanded permiſſion to clear himſelf in full council before the king. Catherine, ever endeavouring to ſupport the balance between the

grandees,

grandees, as moſt beneficial to her own intereſts, granted his demand. The prince, with that generous intrepidity which ſhone in all his actions, vindicated his honour from the treaſonable imputations caſt upon it; and, after having given the lye to whoever dared to maintain or aſſert them, offered to engage in ſingle combat, as the moſt convincing proof of his adverſary's falſehood. The cardinal of Lorrain, who clearly ſaw at whom this defiance was levelled, made a ſign to the young monarch to riſe without reply; but his brother the duke, concealing his indignation with diſſembled friendſhip, praiſed with warmth the prince's noble conduct, and offered likewiſe to maintain his cauſe againſt whatever antagoniſt. Yet in private, he adviſed to arreſt him; but the queen-mother, who foreſaw the utter annihilation of her power by ſuch an act, oppoſed and prevented its execution.

The chancellor died at this time, of grief and horror, excited by the cruel and ſanguinary ſcenes to which he had been a witneſs. He was ſucceeded by Michael de l'Hopital, an able miniſter, and devoted to the queen-mother. His advice confirmed her yet more in that temporiſing and intricate policy, in that perfidious hypocriſy, in thoſe arts of diviſion and oppoſition, which mark her character. She trembled leſt the Guiſes ſhould obtain a complete victory over the princes of the blood, and

and therefore ſecretly ſupported Coligni and the Hugonots. A convocation was ſummoned in this view at Fontainbleau, whither the king was transferred. It was held in her own cabinet, Francis being preſent. The admiral advancing, threw himſelf on his knees before his ſovereign, and preſented a requeſt unſigned, in favour of his own ſect; adding, that though no names were affixed to it, yet, whenever his majeſty pleaſed, it would be inſtantly ſubſcribed by an hundred and fifty thouſand perſons. The cardinal of Lorrain oppoſed it, with that flowery, impetuous, and commanding eloquence, which diſtinguiſhed him. No deciſive reſolution was taken; but the ſtates were ordered to aſſemble, and a national council propoſed, in hopes of finally adjuſting theſe religious differences.

Neither Anthony or Louis were preſent at this conference. They had retired into Guyenne, where they were engaged in concerting meaſures to diſpoſſeſs the Guiſes of their power and offices. The perſon whom they employed as their confidant and meſſenger, named La Sague, was ſeized at Eſtampes, on his return into Gaſcony, charged with a number of letters. The terror of the torture made him confeſs the method of diſcovering their contents. Thoſe of the vidame of Chartres were regarded as peculiarly criminal. He was one of the moſt brave and gallant lords of the court,

court, and had been ſo particularly acceptable to, and favoured by Catherine, as to give riſe to ſuſpicions and accuſations very injurious to her honour. As he was however now become equally an object of her hatred, ſhe cauſed him to be carried to the Baſtile. He was transferred ſome time after to his own houſe, where he died either of chagrin, or the conſequences of his debaucheries *.

Bouchard, chancellor to the king of Navarre, being ſeized, and actuated by the ſame timidity as La Sague, accuſed the prince of Condé with endeavours to ſeduce his brother to treaſonable practices. Notwithſtanding this act of undiſguiſed hoſtility, they both remained unſhaken in their reſolution of attending the ſtates at Orleans †. Their friends adviſed them

* The proteſtant writers, who deteſted Catherine, have not failed to accuſe her of gallantries, among her other crimes. Jurieu particularly names the duke of Nemours, the vidame of Chartres, and the marquis de Meſcouet, as her lovers; and declares her to have been criminally intimate with all theſe. Impartial juſtice muſt, however, acquit her from theſe imputations. Ambition, not love, was her predominant paſſion. Her conduct towards mademoiſelle de Limeuil, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak minutely, was highly oppoſed to any ſuch libertiniſm.—Mezerai, and "Le Laboureur," only blame her love of pleaſures, without any reflection on her honour; which are certainly to be diſtruſted as falſe aſperſions.

† Davila, the great directing hiſtorian of theſe times, beautifully lays open the manœuvres of the Guiſes to draw

them to appear well armed, and numerouſly accompanied: but the mandate which the Guiſes, iſſued in the king's name, forbidding any other followers than their own houſehold; and the confidence which they repoſed on their high rank, and relation to the royal blood, made them deſpiſe and neglect theſe ſalutary precautions.—New informations and intimations the moſt alarming, met them on their way. They were aſſured, that Francis and his mother, intimidated by the impetuous counſels of the duke and cardinal, had been in-

draw the brothers into the ſnare. Louis, ſays he, conſcious that his co-operation in the late conſpiracies and commotions might be aſcertained from the papers and perſons lately ſeized, peremptorily refuſed to thruſt himſelf in the power of his enemies;—but Anthony, either more innocent, or more credulous; and deeming it impoſſible, that an Italian woman, and two ſtrangers, would venture to arreſt and puniſh the princes of the blood, inclined to attend the ſtates. The count de Cruſſol, and the marechal de St. André, were diſpatched by the king, to induce them, by diſſembled aſſurances of amity, not to delay their journey. Condé ſtill remained firm in his determination. This being reported, the marechal de Termes was ſent into Gaſcony, and ordered to levy a body of troops, which might inveſt them in Bearn, where they were unprepared for defence. At the ſame time, the queen-mother, ever effecting her ſchemes by diſſimulation, prevailed on the cardinal of Bourbon, brother to Anthony and Louis, to add his inſtances to hers; and aſſured him of the good intentions of Francis. Theſe united efforts were at length ſucceſsful. The princes reluctantly left Pau, and with a ſlender train proceeded towards Orleans.

duced

duced or compelled to adopt meaſures the moſt ſanguinary. The two princes, notwithſtanding, continued their journey. On their arrival, they entered the royal preſence, and ſaluted the king, who gave them a cold and ungracious reception. The inſtant of their departure, two captains of the guard took them into cuſtody. Anthony was only carefully watched; but the prince of Condé was conducted to a houſe erected purpoſely in a public ſquare, and defended by ſome pieces of cannon *.

The admiral was in Orleans at this time; but d'Andelot, more circumſpect, and conſcious of the danger, had retired into Bretagne. —The lady of Roye, mother to the princeſs of Condé, was arreſted at her own Chateau;

* The marechal de Briſſac firſt propoſed in council the prince's arreſt. Francis ſigned the order, which was reluctantly counterſigned by the chancellor.

" I ſaw the two brothers, Anthony and Louis," ſays Brantome, " when they arrived. The king entered the court of " the palace on horſeback; the prince on foot. Never did I " ſee a man exhibit a more bold and fearleſs mien than did " the latter; but on his return, when arreſted, he appeared " covered with aſtoniſhment. Anthony, who had thought to " diſconcert and terrify his enemies by his menaces, and ap- " pearance at court, was not leſs confounded and amazed."

Davila very minutely deſcribes their arrival at Orleans, the circumſtances of the king's behaviour, and the queen-mother's pretended ſorrow on their arreſt. He ſays, both the princes were obliged to diſmount without the gate.

and

and Grollot, bailiff of Orleans, was taken into cuſtody.

Five judges, nominated to interrogate the prince, waited on him in priſon for that purpoſe. In no degree diſmayed by the violence exerciſed againſt him, he refuſed to plead before ſuch a tribunal; and demanded a public trial by the whole parliament, peers, and king, as his dignity entitled him. This ſpirited and intrepid behaviour did not diſconcert or delay his proceſs. It was purſued uninterruptedly. He ſtood on the extreme verge of fate.—The Guiſes, already anticipating the ſure deſtruction of this powerful rival, arrogant, and intoxicated with ſucceſs, obſerved ſcarce any difference or decorum towards the queen-mother, whom they ſecretly ſuſpected, and meant to diveſt of all influence or authority.—Catherine ſaw the fatal error ſhe had committed, in joining the princes of Lorrain, to her own injury, againſt Anthony and Louis—but it was too late to retract. The evil was beyond a cure. —Grollot's condemnation and execution was univerſally regarded as preparatory to, and indicative of that of the prince: when an unexpected and great event, big with the moſt important conſequences, ſnatched him from the imminent and impending deſtruction.

The king, to avoid the neceſſity of being preſent at the ſpectacle of Grollot's death, had gone out to the chace. On his return, he was

attacked with a heavineſs in the head, which at the end of ſome days produced a ſuppurating abſceſs, with an impoſtume or fiſtula in his ear *. The ſymptoms did not at firſt appear alarming, or mortal; but the Guiſes, apprehenſive of the event, and dreading leſt their prey ſhould eſcape, puſhed on the trial with unprecedented and indecent haſte. The cuſtomary formalities, obſerved in capital caſes, were omitted; and the prince finally condemned to loſe his head.

The chancellor, ever averſe to the violent meaſures purſued, and ſeeing that Francis's malady grew more dangerous, artfully protracted his ſignature to the arret for his execution. Of all the nobles and great perſonages with which the court was crowded—ſo deſpotic was the influence of the princes of Lorrain; ſo abject the devotion paid them—that only the count de Sancerre had the courage to refuſe to ſign it, though three repeated orders of the king were brought him to that purpoſe. Whether Francis himſelf had fixed to it his ſign ma-

* Davila ſays, that "Francis, being under his barber's hands, was ſuddenly ſeized with an apoplectic or fainting fit. His ſervants immediately laid him on the couch, without ſigns of life. He returned to his ſenſes after ſome time; but it was evident from the nature of the attack, and the effects it left on him, that he could not long ſurvive."

nual

nual or not, is a ſecret of ſtate hidden, and never divulged.

Meanwhile the phyſicians, compelled by the nature of the ſymptoms they obſerved in the young king, declared him near his end. The Guiſes, conſcious of the deſperate and critical ſituation in which their conduct had involved them; and believing their own ſafety inſeparably connected with a ſteady adherence to the principles which they had hitherto purſued, ſtood firm. Placing their reliance only in the proſecution of them, they endeavoured to induce Catherine to join them in arreſting the king of Navarre *; but ſhe, too wiſe to be rendered ſubſervient to their purpoſes—and freed from the tyranny they had exerciſed over her, by the proſpect of Francis's death—refuſed to conſent to, or permit his ſeizure.—She ſaw herſelf exactly in that ſituation to which

* Monſieur de Thou, that great hiſtorian, relates that the duke of Guiſe had determined to put Anthony to death in Francis's preſence, and had induced the deluded prince to conſent to it. Though the king of Navarre received information of this infamous reſolution, he had intrepidity enough to enter the apartment in which he was to be aſſaſſinated.—"If they kill me," ſaid he to Reinſy, one of his gentlemen, "carry my ſhirt, all bloody, to my wife "and ſon: they will read in my blood what they ought "to do to revenge it!"—Francis, ſhocked at the enormity of ſuch a crime, did not dare to give the ſign previouſly agreed on; and the duke of Guiſe, quitting the chamber, could not help exclaiming, "Le pauvre roi "que nous avons!"

ſhe fondly aſpired. The approaching minority left the regency open to her ambition. Both parties paid her the moſt aſſiduous court, as to the arbitreſs of their lives and fortunes. In the anticipation of her ſon's end, ſhe took, with the moſt cool perſpicuity and maſterly addreſs, the neceſſary precautions for ſecuring to herſelf the firſt place in the government under Charles, immediate heir to the crown, and who was only ten years and five months old. Anthony promiſed in writing to cede to her the regency, which belonged to him of right, as firſt prince of the blood; and the Guiſes ſwore to ſerve her in every manner, for and againſt whomever ſhe commanded.

Amid theſe intrigues and cabals, Francis the ſecond breathed his laſt, on the eighteenth day from his ſeizure, and aged only ſeventeen years ten months and a half. His reign was about a year and five months *.

We

* The critical nature of his death, ſo opportune for the preſervation of the prince of Condé, ſo fortunate to Catherine of Medicis, whom the Guiſes had deprived of all influence, gave riſe to reports of poiſon. "Le Laboureur," and ſeveral other writers, have accuſed Ambroſe Paré, the king's ſurgeon, and a Scotch valet de chambre, who was a Hugonot, with having poiſoned his night-cap exactly at the place which anſwered to, and covered the fiſtula in his ear: but De Thou, infinitely more worthy of credit, denies and diſproves this aſſertion. He expreſly attributes his death to the weakneſs of his conſtitution, and maladies derived from his mother.

We know not what qualities he poſſeſſed, or might have diſcovered, had he attained to manhood. His capacity appears to have been very mean, and little ſuperior to imbecillity, and his bodily infirmities added to theſe mental defects. Some French hiſtorians have abſurdly given him the epithet of "The king without vice." Voltaire has drawn his portrait more ſpiritedly, and more juſtly, in his Henriade.

"Foible enfant, que de Guiſe adorait les ca-
"prices,
"Et dont on ignorait les vertus et les vices."

Davila ſeems to incline likewiſe to the belief, that he died a natural death; yet he mentions the generally-received opinion of his having been poiſoned. "The young king," ſays he, "had always been troubled with pains and defluxions in his "head, from his infancy. An impoſthume formed itſelf over "his right ear; and that burſting, ſo great a quantity of mat-"ter fell into his throat, that it ſtopped up the paſſage, and "prevented him either from ſpeaking, or receiving any ſort of "nouriſhment.—Moſt people," continues Davila, "believed "at the time, that his barber had conveyed poiſon into his ear; "and it was even reported, that the phyſicians had diſcovered "evident ſigns of it. The ſuddenneſs of Francis's ſeizure, and "the extraordinary criſis in which he expired, would have "given univerſal credit to the accuſation, if the diſorder "which terminated his life had not been known to have "grown up with him from his cradle."

From the teſtimonies of theſe two laſt hiſtorians, we cannot heſitate to believe the king's death natural, and almoſt inevitable from his hereditary weakneſs and complaints.

His

His chaſtity has been made the ſubject of encomium; but to the feebleneſs of his conſtitution, and early youth, this virtue may be chiefly attributed; beſides that his attachment to his conſort was extreme, and her beauty ſuch as to challenge the warmeſt homage of the heart.

Francis's funerals were indecently neglected. Ambition and intrigue occupied the whole court. Catherine, who had been oſtentatiouſly magnificent in the obſequies of her huſband, was equally remiſs in thoſe of her ſon. The Guiſes, on whom he had heaped ſo many favours, to whom he had confided ſuch unlimited power, by a conduct which marked them with the baſeſt ingratitude, did not ſhew him this laſt and poor token of reſpect. They excuſed themſelves under the frivolous pretext of remaining to conſole the young queen, their niece.

Among ſo many lords and biſhops as were at Orleans, only Sanſac and La Broſſe, who had been his governors, and Guillard biſhop of Senlis, who was blind, followed his corpſe to St. Denis.—Upon the cloth which covered his coffin, a billet was found, containing this ſevere and pointed ſarcaſm. "Tanneguy du Chatel, "où es tu?"—It alluded to the funeral rites of Charles the ſeventh.—Du Chatel had been that monarch's favourite, but was baniſhed from court. At his death he generouſly returned,

ed, and, as a mark of his gratitude and affection to a maſter he had loved, performed his funerals at his private expence, with a royal pomp.

Francis the ſecond left no iſſue, legitimate or illegitimate, and the crown deſcended to Charles his brother.——Mary queen of France and Scotland, makes no figure in her huſband's reign. Subſervient to, and awed by the daring genius of her uncles, ſhe performed only an inferior part. They made uſe of her charms and influence over the young king, to bend him to their wiſhes and meaſures. In a court of ſuch gallantry, where her beauty was adored, ſhe could not eſcape ſome malignant and falſe reflections on her conduct; but they do not deſerve to be mentioned, much leſs to be refuted.

The conſtable, who had been repeatedly ordered to Orleans, but whoſe diſtruſt and caution rendered him ſlow, accelerated his march on the news of the king's death *. He

* Davila, uſually ſo exact, and on whoſe authority we may rely with an almoſt implicit faith, expreſly aſſerts, "That the "prince of Condé was condemned to be beheaded before the "royal palace, previous to Francis the ſecond's ſeizure; and "that the execution of the ſentence was only delayed, in hopes "to draw Montmorenci and his ſons into the net, and to in-"volve the king of Navarre in the ſame common deſtruction." So that the conſtable's delays were chiefly inſtrumental to Condé's preſervation. It is impoſſible not to be amazed at the bold and nearly ſucceſsful plan of the duke and cardinal, thus at one blow to cut off, by a ſolemn and public trial, two princes of the blood, and the firſt officer of the crown.

arrived

arrived on the third day after that event, accompanied by ſix hundred horſe; and, making uſe of the authority which his charge gave him, drove the guards from the gates of the city; threatening to hang them up, if they kept the king inveſted, in full peace, and in the centre of his kingdom.

Meanwhile the prince of Condé eſcaped, amid theſe unexpected changes. Francis's death unlooſed his fetters. With a magnanimity and courage becoming himſelf, he notwithſtanding refuſed to quit his priſon, till he knew who had been his proſecutors and accuſers. No perſon dared avow himſelf as ſuch. The Guiſes declared that every ſtep had been taken by the late king's expreſs and particular command; but they did not produce the royal order, in conſequence of which meaſures ſo violent had been purſued. Thirteen days afterwards the prince quitted Orleans, accompanied, as a mark of honour, by thoſe very ſoldiers who had ſerved as his guard, and retired to Ham in Picardy.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.